

WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES INSTRUCTION:
TEACHING TO REPLACE THE RENAISSANCE MAN
IN THE FACE OF CONSERVATISM

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
BY
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BALL STATE UNIVERSITY

MUNCIE, INDIANA

JULY 2019

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ABSTRACT

DISSERTATION: Women's and Gender Studies Instruction: Teaching to Replace the Renaissance Man in the Face of Conservatism

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Regardless of growing global enrollment rates, critics have long interrogated the merit of Women's and Gender Studies referring to it as a frivolous investment. At the same time, many students fail to understand the purpose or benefit of a WGS education while instructors struggle to find pedagogical works to utilize in their teaching. Although studies have offered insight into student experiences and learning outcomes in WGS classrooms, they offer little in terms of the instructors' efforts throughout the teaching and learning process (Berger & Radeloff, 2014; Kelly & Breinlinger, 1995; Sevelius & Stake, 2003; Spoor & LehMiller, 2014; Stake, 2006; 2007; Stake & Gerner, 1987; Stake & Hoffman, 2001; Stake & Rose, 1994; Zucker, 2004). To address this gap in the literature, I explored the experiences and efforts of instructors while teaching for a WGS program or department in a conservative state where the culture challenges the core of the academic discipline. I employed an interpretive phenomenological analysis (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). The study was guided by the research questions (a) how do instructors in four-year institutions of higher education in Indiana experience teaching WGS courses, (b) how do WGS instructors prepare their syllabi, lesson plans, and course materials prior to the start of the course, (c) how do WGS instructors prioritize which lessons and topics are addressed throughout

the semester, and (d) how do WGS instructors facilitate learning in and outside of their classrooms? Eleven instructors from four of the largest public, four-year universities in Indiana participated in semi-structured interviews. The resulting themes of themes (a) guiding students to personal and academic growth, (b) teaching as a form of care, (c) encouraging engagement, and (d) courses as living entities portray the experiences and efforts of the instructors to be intentional, methodical, and care-driven.

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DEDICATION

This is for my students (past, present, and future) and the inspiration and challenge we exchange.

This is for my mother who could not attend college without parental permission.

This is for my father whose brilliance far exceeds a college degree.

This is for my partner and our future together.

This is for us.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This is most likely the closest I will ever come to completing a technical challenge on The Great British Bake Off. A dissertation is a large undertaking that requires a person to produce something they have only ever seen and probably will never be asked to make again. It is physically trying, time consuming, and can absolutely end in tears. For all intents and purposes, my committee members were my Mel and Sue as well as my Paul and Mary. Dr. Latz, Dr. Mulvihill, Dr. Peterson, and Dr. Tagler, thank you for your encouragement and bolstering as well as your keen eyes and knowledgeable, constructive criticism. Your countless efforts have made me a better student, writer, and scholar.

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Finding Women's & Gender Studies is one of the greatest flukes of my life. Within the walls of the Burkhardt Building I have found a tremendously strong, passionate, and determined community that is working to make their campus, community, and world a better place for all. Betsy, Courtney, Julee, Lisa, and Rachael it has been an honor to work with and learn from you. I have no doubt the program will continue to prosper in your skilled hands.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

As a former Girl Scout, it has been engrained in me to leave a place better than I found it. While this message was often used to stress the importance of cleaning up one's campsite, it instilled in me a value for shared spaces and resources. A good Girl Scout would clean up their (singular they) own mess and then look to see what else could be done for the betterment of all. I have found that this mentality, while sometimes taxing, is important. In 2014 when I was granted an assistantship to work as the graduate assistant for the Women's and Gender Studies (WGS) program at Ball State University, this betterment message was at the forefront of my efforts. My assistantship provided me with an office and the financial support necessary for me to complete my graduate degree. The program and campus had shared its space and resources with me, and it was my turn to be a good Girl Scout. It was explained to me by many professionals that student enrollment was the key to securing a better future for the WGS program. Higher student enrollment could lead to increased university support and access to resources. Having studied at that campus for my undergraduate degree, I was uniquely aware of some of the challenges recruitment efforts would have to overcome. In my experience, discussions including the WGS program were not common, and many WGS students (myself included) shared a common narrative of falling into or discovering the field for the first time fairly late in our academic careers. I was not aware my university had a WGS program until my junior year when it was mentioned in a psychology of women course. At this point, it was too late to add it as a major and so I completed the minor in time for graduation.

My peers and I often joked that the WGS program was the best kept secret no one was trying to keep. For many of us, a WGS course was the first opportunity we had been given to discuss personally resonating social justice issues. I strongly believed if more students knew and

understood what WGS offered they would want to join too. I focused my recruitment efforts around this idea. I crafted a seven to 10-minute interactive dialogue that highlighted what feminism was, why it was important, how it could help in the future, and how students could include it in their studies without derailing their graduation deadlines. Between the fall semesters of 2014 and 2015, I gave 29 classroom presentations, and the WGS major and minor enrollment numbers more than doubled. This first year of presentations showed the need to debunk feminists as hairy, man-hating lesbians, but, fortunately for me, these conversations evolved over time. Beyoncé's half-time performance and Alan Rickman's endorsement pushed feminism before the public eye. I was able to focus more on the importance and implications of feminism after quickly explaining that nearly anyone can fit on a sliding scale between Queen B and Severus Snape. By the fall of 2016, after 64 total classroom presentations, minor enrollments reached three-digits, a record high for the program, and major enrollments were more than quadruple what they had been when I started. In the spring of 2018, after more than 100 classroom presentations, the WGS program struggled to accommodate its largest capstone ever and continued to make history in terms of graduation numbers for majors and minors. This is not to say that I am some sort of magician. Other factors could have understandably influenced this influx as well. No financial or social changes in terms of administrative support, however, occurred during this period of time. What had changed was the amount of conversations being had including the WGS program and the availability of information regarding its purpose. This has led me to believe in the importance of accessible information. Gloria Bowles once said, "Perhaps one day the Renaissance man will be replaced by the interdisciplinary woman," and with growing WGS enrollment numbers, I believe, more than ever, that it is possible (as cited in Bowles & Duelli-Klein, 1983, p. 40). I reference Bowles not

to say that women should or are expected to take the place of skilled men in our society but rather that a person's ability to do many things successfully has long been attributed to men when it need not be so.

Background

For many universities, Women's Studies, Gender Studies, Women's and Gender Studies, or Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (henceforth referred to as WGS as an umbrella term) majors make up one of the smallest percentages of incoming degree-seeking freshman. It is common for a student, like me, to stumble upon WGS and for the first time consider committing a portion of their studies to feminism. One might think a field that lacks high freshman enrollment may be struggling as a whole; however, the number of graduating WGS students per year in the United States has increased by more than 300% since 1990 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015). While many incoming freshmen may not initially seek out a feminist education, it is clear later many do just that. To get them to this stage, however, a great deal of work is done by the students, sometimes unconsciously. Students unfamiliar with the field may struggle with several variables that center around accessible information such as the lack of a clear career path, negative attitudes towards feminism, personal biases, and limited availability on university campuses. The following information is presented to illustrate the precarious position of WGS on university campuses as well as nationally and to substantiate the need for the study at hand.

Career Path

Fields such as law, psychology, and engineering have well-known potential, but not always likely, career outcomes for students. For example, many students seek out a degree in psychology thinking it will lead them to a career as a counselor or researcher even though this is

not always the actual outcome. No such trajectory exists for WGS students. The lessons learned throughout a WGS education are applicable in nearly every field, and therefore, student career aspirations are rather widespread. In their book *Transforming Scholarship: How Women's and Gender Studies Students are Changing Themselves and the World*, Berger and Radeloff (2014) devoted a chapter to potential career paths for students studying WGS. Accompanied by a long but not exhaustive list of careers alumni have held, the text showed the expansive application of the degree. This section of the book denoted three categories WGS graduates most commonly fall under: sustainers, evolver, and synthesizers. Sustainers pursued career options that directly address gender issues or work in historically related professional areas. Evolvers had taken their WGS education and applied it to areas not previously linked to feminism, and synthesizers were individuals who often migrated between the two as they moved throughout their professional career while also utilizing activism in paid and unpaid conditions.

While a more blatant path may be more desirable for prospective students, WGS graduates have found a number of career options ready for their education and skills. Including such titles as counselor, director, administrator, researcher, gender specialist, and advocate, Berger and Radeloff's (2014) published survey data showed an extensive application of a WGS education in the job market. Of course, each of these students had to learn at some point that these were options available to them because of the educational path they had chosen. This information is not always at the forefront of a WGS education and, therefore, may be a lesser known characteristic of the field. Again, exposure to information plays a large part in opening students' eyes to potential of a WGS education.

Attitudes Towards Feminism

Though familiarity with WGS is often limited, exposure to negative attitudes towards feminism and social justice issues is generally high in American society. Early subjection to anti-feminism may also interfere with a college student's likelihood to see WGS as a viable educational and vocational path for themselves. As students look towards their family, friends, and mentors for guidance in the early stages of college readiness, WGS enrollment often suffers from a great deal of misunderstanding regarding feminism. Feminism, or the on-going fight for equality, has a long history of being seen as socially unacceptable to the greater heteropatriarchy. Dating back to the 1920s when women earned the right to vote, feminists (suffragists at the time) were viewed as disgusting home-wrecking monsters (McQuiston, 1997). While this view was not shared by all, feminists working towards gender equality have been called many derogatory terms. Today, it is far more common to hear them being referred to as hairy, man-hating lesbians, feminazis, or social justice warriors (Weber, 2010). Because a feminist identity is not always seen as socially desirable, many may reject the movement and all related parts, even if the person does hold similar beliefs. At the risk of seeming undesirable because of the lack of positive information regarding feminism, students may not seek out a WGS major or minor in fear of social rejection. Often students must first tackle and resolve the dissonance between their own beliefs and the influence of their surroundings when they decide to pursue a WGS education.

Biases

For incoming college students to seek out a major or minor in WGS, it is likely they have somewhat successfully tackled the two prior areas of difficulty. This may require a conscious awareness of social constructs and their impacts on lived experiences that is not often

common in traditional-aged college students. While rare, WGS dedicated freshmen do exist. Over time studies have shown, however, that college students often lack awareness and concern for the impact of prejudices such as sexism, racism, classism, or ableism. For example, college students tend to respond positively to sexist humor and rape-related jokes (Ford, 2000; Ryan & Kanjorski, 1998). Of course, laughing at jokes does not make college students inherently sexist. The enjoyment of sexist humor has, however, been “positively correlated with rape-related attitudes and beliefs, self-reported likelihood of forcing sex, and psychological, physical, and sexual aggression in men” (Ryan & Kanjorski, 1998, p. 1). Female participants also enjoyed the jokes but did so at a lower level and viewed them as being more offensive. This did not, however, make the female participants any less likely to tell a sexist joke. In some cases, exposure to sexist humor has been shown to increase one’s tolerance of sex discrimination and expands their perceptions of what is socially acceptable behavior (Ford, 2000). Research has shown students often lack the values, beliefs, or awareness that lead a person to stand in opposition to sexism in their social circles. Sexism, sexist attitudes, and rape culture continue to be issues on university campuses because of the lack of successful intervention by university administration (Carey, Durney, Shepardson, & Carey, 2015; Martin, 2016; McMahon, 2010). This campus culture does not necessarily create students who readily seek out a field that fights against the same kind of thinking at which they willingly laugh.

While some students may be opposed to sexism and sexist attitudes, racism often serves as another hurdle for students to overcome on their path to a WGS education. Because of the nature of the field, students must be willing to confront their own privilege and racist beliefs when they take on a WGS major or minor. Research regarding student attitudes towards race has shown a great divide in the acceptance and desire for required diversity courses (Rankin &

Reason, 2005). White students have shown significant disinterest in required diversity courses and believed they would increase racial tensions while students of color believed they would improve the campus climate. This dichotomy is telling of the underlying bias students arrive at college with, sometimes unknowingly. Historically, White students have been resistant to most changes in favor of furthering the education of diversity of any kind (Fuentes & Shannon, 2016; Rankin & Reason, 2005; Wilson, Meyer, & McNeal, 2012).

When surveyed about the university administration's fostering of diversity, White students have been found to believe enough had been done, whereas students of color readily disagreed (Rankin & Reason, 2005). A racial split in responses was also present when researchers asked about the inclusion of marginalized groups in the curriculum, with Black students favoring the addition. The significant difference in perceptions of diversity and its need for support on university campuses is perhaps the strongest evidence not all students are likely to adopt feminist ideals. This may be particularly true if students have grown up in or have become accustomed to the political and cultural views of a conservative state. Citizen policy preferences have allowed researchers to better identify more conservative and liberal states. Idaho, Oklahoma, and Utah have been found to be the most conservative states in the U.S. while Washington DC, New York, Vermont, and Massachusetts were found to be the most liberal states (Tausanovitch & Warshaw, 2013). Conservative state characteristics include but are not limited to high religiosity, strict abortion policies, attempts to ban same-sex marriage, wage gaps, and abstinence-only sex education that come into direct opposition with common feminist beliefs and values (Cavazos-Rehg et al., 2012; Oppenheimer, Oliveira, & Blumenthal, 2014). Because WGS relies heavily on awareness, a critical gaze, and an understanding of intersectionality, few

students may have the cognitive and emotional maturity to consider these abstract concepts early on in their educational careers.

Availability

As I just reported, there are a number of external informational, social, and personal variables that may interfere with a student's ability or willingness to pursue a WGS major or minor in college. I want now to complicate that point by addressing the fact that not all obstacles come from outside of the university. Another challenge is the availability of the field. A major or minor in WGS is, unfortunately, not available at all academic institutions. While nearly 85% of U.S. public universities and colleges offer at least one course in WGS, the percentage for programs or departments is far lower (King, Parker, Hill, Kelly, & Eason, 2017). As of 2010, there were approximately "600 programs, departments, and curricular units variously called women's, gender, feminist, and sexuality studies in North America" (Wood, 2015, p. 387). Given that there are more than 2,600 accredited four-year colleges in the United States, this would suggest that less than 23% of schools readily offer a WGS program or department. Furthermore, many universities offer only a minor program, a major program, or a certificate in WGS, respectively. Students exposed to and inspired by a WGS course may resort to transferring schools to obtain their degree of choice. University resources such as funds and personnel as well as administrative support are key components in expanding or shrinking the presence of WGS on a campus. While less drastic than transferring schools, many students must resort to pursuing a degree in something other than their preferred area. There are still many universities without a WGS department, program, certificate, or class in the U.S. Each of these elements is enough to cause any academic field some trouble in terms of recruitment and enrollment. However, when grouped together as they are for WGS they can be terminal.

Current and Applicable Teaching Strategies

The above challenges have been presented to provide context for the field of WGS. In a heteronormative, patriarchal society, a feminist field such as WGS must overcome or work with a number of difficult variables. While not the direct focus of this study, the presented challenges are important to note as an investigation into other aspects of WGS could offer insight in combatting some of those challenges already discussed. My point is not to minimize other challenges the field faces but rather to draw attention to the possibility that better understanding one aspect of WGS may be able to assist others in understanding more. As mentioned above, conservative state cultures may discourage students from seeking out a WGS education. Professionals in these states may come together to share information to assist one another in overcoming the challenges their state may cause. For example, in Indiana WGS professionals have organized created a space to support each other.

The Midwest Regional Gender Studies Consortium (MRGSC) is a regional coalition of Women's and Gender Studies departments, programs, centers, and institutes at community colleges and public and private universities for discussion and support of all aspects of the functioning of women's, gender, and sexuality studies programs and departments. Our mission is to ensure the continued strength, visibility, and development of interdisciplinary women's, gender, and sexuality studies at universities and colleges in the Midwest. We gather people working in women's, gender, and sexuality studies across the Midwest to share resources, knowledge, and strategies for strengthening ongoing activities and developing new initiatives in gender, women's, and sexuality studies. (Midwest Regional Gender Studies Consortium, 2012 para. 1)

In the recent past, the meetings have focused on the organization of feminist academic programs within the university, recruitment and marketing strategies, and feminist research. During these sessions, program chairs, directors, and instructors have shared with their colleagues the many challenges, successes, and frustrations they have faced while working in WGS. Last hosted in the spring of 2018 at Indiana University Purdue University of Columbus (IUPUC), the MRGSC session began with an explanation. Weeks before, those who had indicated their attendance, me included, were sent a number of academic articles to read in preparation for the meeting. Upon reading them I was surprised to see that all the selected pieces had been published between 1989 and 1995. This collection included an article by Rose (1989) regarding activism as a teaching technique, Freedman's (1990) input on consciousness raising in the classroom, Wood's (1993) thoughts on bringing in new voices, and Johnston's (1995) reflection on postmodern pedagogy. The ages of these articles were key. The articles were meant to spur conversations about the lack of contemporary and generalizable feminist teaching strategies from which WGS instructors could read and learn. The organizer further stressed that these somewhat dated articles and many others tended to be grounded in the discipline, topic, unit or some other restrictive characteristic that made their application in dissimilar classrooms strenuous. This meeting and the discussions had within stressed the need for more current academic works with the potential to be broadly applied in WGS classrooms. This event paired with my awareness of the challenges to the field served as a personal call to action.

Positionality

In many ways, I am considered an insider to this field, having taught for a WGS program for four semesters and worked with its promotion, recruitment, outreach, and marketing for four years. According to Kanuha (2000), an insider researcher may choose a project based on one's

closeness to its subject whether it be literal physical distance or figurative familiarity. I have made a conscious effort to explore a field and its methods I actively engage with on a weekly basis through my assistantship. The sample I included in this study required me to interview colleagues within my own institution, those with whom I have come in contact with at conferences, summits, and through mutual contacts, and also a number of individuals with whom I have yet to correspond.

Because I am an insider, I am able to use my own lived experiences to better explore and understand the information my participants convey in this study (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007). In this role, transparency is imperative in conveying my identity to my interviewees and also to myself. This can be accomplished through the use of reflexivity journals and a critical evaluation of my own cognitions throughout the research (Creswell, 2014). This writing must take into consideration my own background as well as my lived experiences to become a reliable qualitative researcher.

My Background

I am a White, gay, gender non-conforming female, in my late twenties, who was raised in a Christian, middle-class family. I grew up mostly in the state of Indiana, a conservative place that has become known for its support of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), approval of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA), and of course the Indy 500. I am a first-generation college graduate; however, I grew up knowing I would pursue an undergraduate degree. Being the daughter of a successful self-taught automotive engineer and problem solver as well as an elementary teaching aid, I was offered opportunities my parents had not found to be viable for themselves. Having earned a bachelor's degree, a master's degree, and now working on a doctoral degree from the same institution, I have made up for the lack of understanding of higher

education I often struggled with throughout my early collegiate career. Having sought guidance from fellow students and faculty mentors, much of my early college experience was similar to trial and error accompanied by the pressure to persevere.

My studies have earned me a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's degree in social psychology; however, my personal passion has long been centered on equality and social justice. I first began my graduate studies working in a division of student affairs where I advised multicultural student organizations. Through this experience, I was able to explore the various avenues in which equality can be cultivated. As mentioned above, I was later being granted an assistantship with a WGS program. I have been fortunate to assist with, learn in, and contribute to an academic field that values and pursues social justice. In my current position, I mentor, counsel, teach, build new courses, and oversee the marketing, recruitment, outreach, and promotional efforts of the program on campus and within the surrounding community. Through this work, I have been able to identify, learn from, and attempt to solve a number of challenges those in and outside of the field are facing. This time of investigation and experiment have greatly impacted my research interests.

My Experiences

As addressed earlier, as the graduate assistant to a WGS program, it quickly became apparent that my efforts should focus on increasing WGS enrollment. Alongside the classroom presentations, I attended on-campus events aimed to assist students in choosing a major and dispensed promotional posters, buttons, and stickers to anyone interested. Though it did not become a common practice, a number of these items were found destroyed or defaced across campus and occasionally shoved under the locked door to the WGS office. I also created a WGS Facebook page to assist in exposing students to feminist causes, resources, and events on

their university campus. Posts on the page have since attracted challenging, if not hateful, comments. Ball State University is, after all, located in the formerly hyper-segregated city of Muncie in the notably conservative state of Indiana (Massey, 2016). I incorporated the mangled items in my presentations stressing the need for feminism in the face of such anger and destruction. Throughout these efforts, I was faced with the same questions I addressed in my presentations “what is WGS” and “what can I do with a WGS degree?” Many of the students who I came in contact with had never heard of the field, let alone contemplated it for themselves. As a student, it was only through my experience of a WGS education that I was able to understand and value the field. Students needed to be in the classroom to understand it, but people are not likely to enroll in a class they do not understand the purpose. While recruitment efforts appear to have had a great deal of influence on our major and minor enrollment, I believe there must be a more efficient way to reach students and make WGS information more accessible to them. There must be some way to take what is happening within the classroom and make it available, at least in part, to those on the outside.

Totality of My Positionality

My background and experiences have and will continue to shape the ways in which I view, interpret, and make meaning of the world around me. My race, sexuality, gender identity, age, and socioeconomic status in conjunction with my professional experiences grant me unique privilege while working with a WGS program and greatly inform my interpretation of the phenomenon with which I have become well acquainted. It should be noted, however, I am aware my involvement in and commitment to the success of WGS has the potential to introduce bias in this study. Still, I believe it is because of these variables that I am able to better understand and engage with the phenomenon of teaching in WGS.

Statement of the Problem

Continuously inaccessible and misunderstood, the challenge of increasing the comprehension surrounding WGS has piqued my problem-solving genes. WGS education has been consistently called into question (Stake, 2006). Critics have long interrogated the merit of the field and have claimed such an education fails to instill the importance of critical thinking in its students. Regardless of growing global enrollment rates, some have written off the discipline entirely by referring to it as a frivolous investment. Attitudes such as these as well as those presented above create on-going difficulties for programs that rely on the support of a college dean for monetary resources (Armstrong & Huber, 2015; Loss, 2011; Wood, 2012). Many students fail to understand the purpose or benefit of a WGS major or minor until they find themselves sitting in one of the classrooms. At the same time, WGS administration and instructors struggle to find contemporary and easily applicable feminist academic works to utilize in their teaching.

As I turned to the available literature, I found confusion and rejection of the field to be widely-shared across the nation. WGS professionals, in particular, have noted student reluctance, confusion, and seemingly blind rejection of a WGS education (Berger & Radeloff, 2014). Thus far, the studies pertaining to WGS have focused on college students' perspectives. This collection includes a quantitative study examining student perceptions of WGS course naming and instructor gender (Spoor & LehMiller, 2014), a quantitative experimental study of attitudes towards adopting the identity of a feminist (Zucker, 2004), a pretest and posttest study regarding the importance of attitudes in class impact (Sevelius & Stake, 2003), a questionnaire used to examine the influence of a feminist identity on feminist action (Kelly & Breinlinger, 1995), pretest posttest examinations of changes in social attitudes, activism, personal and

professional gains, and self-confidence (Stake, 2006, 2007; Stake & Gerner, 1987; Stake & Hoffman, 2001), and a longitudinal study of long-term impacts on personal and lives and political activism (Stake & Rose, 1994). Although these studies have offered a great deal of insight and understanding of both WGS and non-WGS students, they offer little in terms of examining the instructors' efforts throughout the teaching and learning process. In conjunction with the literature that will be presented in Chapter Two, published works paint a detailed picture of what feminist teaching aims to do and what it has measurably accomplished. This collection of knowledge and data, however, offers very little in terms of illustrating how one may transform feminist pedagogy into beneficial learning outcomes.

The aim of education is constantly evolving. Today there is an urge to best prepare students for the workforce; however, little educational research thus far has focused on those who oversee this preparation. Course instruction begins with a plan, requires a great number of considerations and decisions, and is enacted by the professor. Entrusted with the responsibility to encourage learning and share knowledge with students, adjunct, affiliate, contract, and full-time faculty members have an intimate knowledge and understanding of their course objectives and the ways in which they go about meeting them. In other words, WGS instructors are the experts on their own efforts and classroom experiences.

An investigation of what is occurring behind the curtain could offer guidance in confronting and countering some of the confusion and uncertainty surrounding the purpose and application of a WGS major or minor in many ways. By identifying common and outlying elements of the teaching and learning process, such as the use of feminist theory, pedagogy, and praxis, the study could provide marketable content that might increase student and administrative understanding and support. Utilizing a sample from a conservative state, however, incorporates

the very real influence of external social, political, and cultural structures that could be hindering or serving to help the learning process for students. Through the examination of what goes on before and during a WGS course in this setting, differing teaching strategies could be highlighted and made available for teaching in states with similar challenging cultures. The failure thus far to inspect the preparation, prioritization, and facilitation of WGS courses leaves a considerable number of variables and potential resources untouched.

Statement of Purpose and Research Questions

As the field of WGS combats a number of challenges, WGS instructors struggle to find generalizable teaching strategies to implement in their work. This study aims to address the gap in the literature and to further the understanding of the teaching and learning that occurs through a WGS program or department in a conservative state. The purpose of this study is to understand the experiences and efforts of instructors while teaching for a WGS program or department in a conservative state where the culture challenges the core of the academic discipline. To investigate and understand the experiences of these instructors, I employed a phenomenological approach (Gray, 2013). In this vein, the research was guided by the research questions:

RQ 1: How do instructors in four-year institutions of higher education in Indiana experience teaching WGS courses?

RQ 2: How do WGS instructors prepare their syllabi, lesson plans, and course materials prior to the start of the course?

RQ 3: How do WGS instructors prioritize which lessons and topics are addressed throughout the semester?

RQ 4: How do WGS instructors facilitate learning in and outside of their classrooms?

Conceptual Framework

Seeking out the nuanced, unique, and subjective experiences of these individuals calls for an interpretivist framework (Crotty, 1998). Interpretivism focuses on contextualized meaning or the social construction of reality (Greene, 1994). Through this framework, an objective truth is rejected, and the act of inquiry is “unabashedly and unapologetically subjectivist” (p. 536). As stated by Smith (1989) social reality is “based on a constant process of interpretation and reinterpretation of the intentional, meaningful behavior or people- including researchers” (p. 85). Interpretive inquiry places value in “the phenomenological meaningful lived experience” or “people’s interpretations and sense makings of their experiences in a given context” (Greene, 1994, p. 536). Questions used in interpretivist inquiry are geared towards what happens and why it occurs in the eyes of the participants (Gray, 2013).

Smith (1989) noted that this form of inquiry eventually becomes hermeneutical because “investigators, like everyone else, are part of the circle of interpretation” (p. 136). As the researcher, my own investigation and interpretation of the events are as unique as my participants’. I identified, examined, and related to the shared content differently than others because of our differing backgrounds, experiences, and contexts (Crotty, 1998). Once more, Smith (1989) stated that the goal of interpretivist inquiry is “not a matter of manipulation and control, particularly via method, but rather it is a question of openness and dialogue” (p. 137). Through this research process, I engaged an interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) to understand the experiences and efforts of WGS instructors teaching in a conservative state (Larkin & Thompson, 2012; Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009).

Terms

For the purpose of clarity and continuity, the following terms have been provided with their operational definitions. These terms serve as core elements of the study and the field to which it belongs.

Feminism: a highly-stigmatized term often used in academic settings to describe the promotion of equality through the exploration of and resistance to the unequal treatment of individuals based on race, sex, gender, sexuality, ability, class, ethnicity, nationality, and other social structures (Schmitz & Kazyak, 2017).

Women's & Gender Studies (WGS): an academic field in which “the interrogation of identity, power, and privilege go far beyond the category ‘woman’” and incorporate “intersectionality, which examines how categories of identity (e.g., sexuality, race, class, gender, age, ability, etc.) and structures of inequality are mutually constituted and must continually be understood in relationship to one another, and transnationalism, which focuses on cultures, structures and relationships which are formed as a result of the flows of people and resources across geopolitical borders, foundations of the discipline” (National Women's Studies Association, 2017).

Feminist Theory: “a body of writing that attempts to describe, explain, and analyze the conditions of women's lives” (Kolmar & Bartkowski, 2000, p. 2).

Intersectionality: a relatively new theory which “explicitly situates identity as multiple and layered and existing at once within systems of both oppression and privilege” (Jones, 2009, p. 289).

Pedagogy: “refers to the ‘art’ or ‘science’ of teaching, the processes and practices of imparting knowledge to learners and validating students’ knowledge through evaluation and assessments” (Luke, 1996, p. 4).

Praxis: is the combination of “theoretical discussion of feminist methodology with detailed accounts of practical research processes” (Stanley, 2013, p. i).

Activism: “defined as some kind of work on behalf of women” (Stewart, Lal, & McGuire, 2011, p. 900).

Summary

In this chapter I presented the necessary elements of understanding for my phenomenological study regarding the experiences and efforts of WGS course instructors in a conservative state. I have provided an explanation of my position as an insider researcher in combination with my personal background and professional experiences. The aim of the study was addressed and stressed the need for understanding in regard to WGS instruction via the research questions. I approached this inquiry through an interpretive phenomenological framework guided by a constructivist epistemology. Furthermore, operational definitions were provided to ensure consistent understanding of common and critical terminology.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This study was designed to understand the experiences and efforts of instructors while teaching for a WGS program or department in a conservative state where the culture challenges the core of the academic discipline. I used qualitative phenomenological methods to examine these experiences and efforts. Literature on this particular phenomenon from the instructor's point of view is fairly limited and constrained to specific, individual experiences. This anecdotal literature includes the mapping of an intersectional course (Naples, 2016), a four-point summary of WGS conference attendees' concerns regarding the future of feminism, reflexivity, growing divides, and the need for better communication within the field (Baiada & Jensen-Moulton, 2006), returning to disciplinary and interdisciplinary directions of the field (Cooper, 2016), instructor experiences and insights while teaching about lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) identities, families, and intersectionality in non-WGS courses (Goldberg & Allen, 2017), and a personal account of teaching gender studies in a small southern college (Hammons-Bryner, 1996). I have, therefore, composed a review of literature consisting of relevant properties of the field of WGS, elements of a feminist education, and expectations of university faculty members.

I compiled the literature review through the use of multiple sources including electronic databases (ERIC, Academic Search Premiere, Web of Science, and PsycINFO) and public search engines such as Google Scholar. This traditional review of literature includes refereed journal articles, books, and conference publications. The literature presented in Chapter Two highlights notable characteristics and tools of the field, empirical findings unique to WGS, and aspects of the professionals' lives who are doing the actual teaching. While WGS in Higher Education focuses on feminist theory, Women's Studies, organization/structure, WGS in the Classroom

highlights the curriculum, feminist pedagogy, intersectionality, and feminist praxis commonly used in the field. Leaving the WGS Classroom draws attention to the personal and academic learning outcomes associated with a feminist education. The final section gives a brief and general summary of faculty workloads in terms of internal and external service.

WGS in Higher Education

The field of WGS is constantly growing and developing. In 2007, there were approximately 650 undergraduate women's studies programs in the U.S. having grown from 525 programs in 1989 and the 276 programs available in 1977 (Reynolds, Shagle, & Venkataraman, 2007). While impressive, as previously stated, approximately only 23% of universities in the U.S. have a WGS program or department (Wood, 2015). These academic programs are often quite unique and may be called by any number of names ranging from feminist studies, women's studies, gender studies, WGS, or a combination of other relative terms. Undergraduate WGS programs serve more than 90,000 students, an enrollment far larger than any other interdisciplinary field (National Women's Studies Association, 2009). There are approximately 35 scholarly journals and numerous conferences around the world related to WGS (Association of College & Research Libraries, 2013; Banaszak, 2005). Much of the literature concerning the field in higher education has focused on: its theories (Bowles & Duelli-Klein, 1983), history (Kennedy & Beins, 2005), organization and structure (DiGeorgio-Lutz, 2002), teaching and learning outcomes (Stake & Hoffman, 2001), and unique challenges (Alemán & Renn, 2002). It is common for each of these areas to be notably different depending on the age, size, and location of the department or program within the university.

Feminist Theory

Said to be one of the first to publish efforts to theorize the position of women in a male-dominated political and social world, Mary Wollstonecraft (1792) is often given credit for the creation of feminist theory because of her book *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman: With Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects*. Feminist theory has aimed to provide a lens through which life and its many phenomena can be examined critically through the experiences of women (Bunch, 1979; hooks, 1991). As noted by Berger and Radeloff (2014), “early women’s studies scholars sought new theoretical concepts to explore the features of women’s lives (e.g. sexual violence, prostitution, motherhood) that had yet to be fully understood” (p. 44). Professionals in other fields have used this practice and turned to concepts of citizenship, democratic rights, language, and religion, rethinking them through a women’s experience (Berger & Radeloff). This examination is intersectional and incorporates such elements as race, gender, age, sexuality, ethnicity, and ability (Grant, 1993). Feminist theory became a collection of theories that lend a hand to liberal, radical, Marxist, socialist, psychoanalytic, eco, care-focused, existentialist, postmodern, and women of color feminisms that differ based on beliefs of approach, focus, and identity (Tong, 2013).

While early theory was often defined by historical events and the early efforts by the women’s movement, feminist theory written after 1963 was more notably tied to societal shifts than time itself (Boxer, 1982; Tuana, 2005). Liberal feminism, founded on the early writings and women’s suffrage movement, viewed female subordination as being engrained in social customs and laws in such a way that they denied women access to the public world such as the academy and marketplace (Tong, 2013). Liberal feminists follow the belief that women must be given the same treatment as men and that no one should be systematically disadvantaged.

Liberal feminism views the patriarchy as being deeply rooted not only in legal and political structures but also in social and cultural institutions. Rather than reform these sources of oppression, radical feminists believe these institutions must be overturned in order to accomplish gender equality. Within each school of feminist thought, however, there are varying and conflicting views such as radical-libertarians and radical-cultural feminist who view and value gender and androgyny differently. Following the establishment of WGS, feminist theory notably shifted hands, arguably becoming inaccessible to individuals with less education because of its growing complexity.

Until this point, grassroots organizations utilized feminist theory in their activism to create change and to challenge sexist gender roles (hooks, 2000). Women of color came together to craft Black radical feminist theories that would provide a basis for their fight for equal rights. By the mid-1960s, however, many women's studies courses created by mostly White female faculty members in higher education used feminist theory to facilitate thought and consciousness of the female experience to students with privilege (Evans, 1980). It was not until years later that demands were made at Cornell University for the first female studies courses to be established just as there was Black Studies at the school. From this, a 10-volume series was pieced together that included syllabi, reading lists, instructor experiences, 16 course outlines that were taught or proposed between 1969 and 1970, and a 10-course curriculum from San Diego State that later become the first women's studies program in the nation (Tobias, 1970). By December of the same year, a second edition was published consisting of 66 course outlines and bibliographies collected by the Commission on the Status of Women of the Modern Language Association (Howe, 1970). The founding of women's studies as an academic field, born out of the grassroots activism of the women's movement in the late 1970s, caused a great change in the

production of feminist theory (Armstrong & Huber, 2015). From 1975 to 1985, the vast majority of theory being written was by academic women in association with the new field of feminist scholarship (Conway, Bourque, & Scott, 1989; Ginsberg, 2008).

Women's Studies

Through higher education, student and faculty activism, feminist theory, and the women's movement, feminism gained political power leading to what was termed the "second wave." A decade after the first women's studies course appeared in the United States, the National Women's Studies Association (NWSA) was formed. The NWSA was created to support and encourage the educational efforts for female equality that had shown to be transformative in the lives of students, intuitions, and society as a whole (National Women's Studies Association, 1977). Today, NWSA conferences and programs allow for students, teachers, and researchers to share experiences, promote their work, and learn from one another, and disseminate knowledge about women and gender issues, breakthroughs, and services more successfully.

Though the purpose of the women's studies field was to educate, expose, and challenge the discrimination and oppression of women, controversy broke out when some did not see women's studies as being responsible for helping to aid the larger women's movement. Privileged, White, middle-class, heterosexual feminists attempted to remove women's studies from what they viewed as being a radical women's movement (Forfreedom, 1974). Differing views on the desired political and academic goals of the field caused great duress during this time. Noting the difficult situation women's studies had been placed into, Adrienne Rich refocused the issue around the students. Though ultimately a part of the university, Rich (1976)

viewed women's studies as being a place in which the students could claim their education, demand to be taken seriously, and be realistically prepared for the lives awaiting them.

The 1990s welcomed what has commonly been termed the "third wave" of the feminist movement. This wave has aimed to make up for some of the weaknesses of the prior period. Including such topics as queer theory, transgender rights, racism, and sex positivity, the third wave stresses the intersectionality of the current movement (Heywood & Drake, 1997; Johnson, 2002). The inclusion efforts were and are mirrored in the teachings in women's studies with the addition of classes highlighting sexual, class, and racial privilege. These changes, in part, attempt to mend the destruction caused by the previous exclusion of certain identities in academic feminism. With this in mind, many second wave issues are still left to be settled. For instance, some women's studies scholars believed women's studies should be introduced as a part of the general education instead of as an elective. However, others worry this would bring an end to women's studies programs altogether (Lougee, 1980). Because of the growing inclusivity of the field, many different names are currently used across university campuses. In 1990, discussions regarding the use of "women's studies" rather than "gender studies" emerged as many scholars believed the latter to be more representative of the non-binary direction of feminism (Berger & Radeloff, 2014). Still, many worried that a name change would contribute to the subordination of women and have continued using "women's studies" or have combined the two. A more recent change has been the addition or substitution of "sexuality" in the title. Still today, many arguments occur regarding the naming, structure, and organization of such programs on university campuses.

Organization/Structure

WGS has long resisted traditional approaches through its interdisciplinarity and focus on cross-discipline learning outcomes, complex intersectional constructions, and prevention of power imbalances (Conway-Turner, 1998). Berger and Radeloff (2014) identify two models for WGS structure on university campuses. In the first, WGS operates as its own autonomous department with control over its personnel, curricula, and allocation of resources. The second model, however, depicts WGS as an academic program with shared faculty lines and a director from an academic department. Directors or department heads in this field are less likely to have earned advanced degrees in WGS than nearly any other discipline on university campuses. Rather, administrative positions in these academic programs are frequently occupied by professionals from related fields such as sociology, social work, history, and anthropology. The mere staffing of WGS in terms of administration and instructors embodies the fundamental interdisciplinary organization and character of the field (Dayton & Levenstein, 2012; McCallum, Rahaman, & Turnball, 2015). Limited by their resources, WGS programs frequently rely a great deal on affiliate faculty members to teach courses (Berger & Radeloff, 2014). This means students may end up taking a WGS course from someone they used to refer to as their English or Sociology professor.

Having an interdisciplinary program such as this on campus invites other departments to offer classes regarding race, sexuality, ability, and gender that may not have previously been required of them. WGS program chairs or department heads often meet with faculty members to discuss possible course offerings that fit the interest of the instructor and the needs of the students. Affiliate faculty teaching courses both explicitly offered by a WGS program as well as

those that are cross-listed, are also given the unique opportunity to engage with students with whom they would not ordinarily interact.

WGS in the Classroom

For many students in higher education, the creation of feminist theory, the history of Women's Studies, and the organization and structure of their particular academic unit are distant and quiet influences on their experiences with the field. Instead, they are more likely to recall that which took place in the physical or online classroom. These memories may include but are not limited to the kinds of knowledge they acquired, the methods of inquiry they engaged with, or the physical activities in which they participated.

Interdisciplinary and Interdepartmental

While the interdisciplinarity of the field may seem like a convenient solution to an unfortunate staffing problem, it is far more intentional. Though it has been critiqued for being too narrowly focused on gender, WGS actually provides its students with a diverse curriculum. The phrase "interdisciplinary field" commonly refers to an academic discipline with a set focus that borrows knowledge, methods, and cognitive tools from other fields (Spelt, Biemans, Tobi, Luning, & Mulder, 2009; Wood, 2012). Rather than committing "methodolatry," or the act of believing there is only one way to measure, evaluate, or accomplish something, WGS students are taught many different tactics (Daly, 1985). For example, a WGS class, while still focusing on gender, may also study and utilize rhetorical devices most often studied in communication classrooms. Interdisciplinary learning allows the pupil to draw connections between what they have or can learn in other classes and what they are currently learning. WGS classrooms often utilize many forms of cultural artifacts to better understand gender and sources of oppression, such as movies and documentaries, memoirs and diaries, photography and art, historical records

and archives, advertisements and commercials, and music and performance (Berger & Radeloff, 2014; Case, 2007; DeMuth, 2011; Karlsson, 2015; Pritchard, 2013; Weber, 2010). These various sources of social, political, economic, and cultural data are needed to assist students in developing the “boundary-crossing skills” expected of interdisciplinary thinking taught in WGS classrooms (Spelt et al., 2009, p. 1). The inclusion of these artifacts not only assists students in becoming critical of what has been made but also what they will make and do once they graduate.

An undergraduate baccalaureate degree from a WGS program often follows a similar curriculum: a required introductory class, cross-listed elective, a required feminist theory course, research projects, a capstone, and possibly an internship or service-learning opportunity (Levin, 2007). While students may be taking a cross-listed course included in the WGS curriculum, the class may predominantly be centered on language, art, or psychology. This allows the student to see the connective tissue that often silently exists between two entities. Often within these WGS specific courses, students are taught a critical approach to knowledge as well as facts. Rather than depending on tests to evaluate student learning, WGS instructors may require participation in classroom discussions to gauge the students’ understanding and thinking on a given subject. WGS students are encouraged to debate issues and to utilize their own experiences as well as their peers’ as valid data points, often focusing on diversity and displacing White men as the social norm. Because of this curricular setup, WGS students have an expansive knowledge that spans many intersecting specialized fields addressing women’s and gender issues.

Intersectionality

Today, feminist classrooms far more likely to focus on intersectionality and oppressive structures, stressing the influence and interaction of race, sexuality, ability, age, and gender

(Shrewsbury, 1987; Weber, 2010). Having emerged from critical race theory and legal studies, intersectionality is an analytical paradigm that takes into consideration the interaction of identity and systems of oppression in society (McCall, 2005). Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) first coined the term when she noticed Black women were left out of discussions of feminist theory because of their race and were absent in conversations of racism because of their gender. Women of color activists and theorists like Crenshaw argued gender could not be understood when examined in isolation from other complex systems of oppression (Berger & Radeloff, 2014). Early practices of intersectional thinking resulted in the creation of Black Women's Studies in the late 1970s that focused on the political situation of Black women and Black Women's Studies, the relationship between Black Women's Studies, feminist politics, and activism, the need to be radical and analytic, and a teacher's awareness of problems within the academy (Hull & Smith, 2016). Popular feminist education publications at the time provided evidence for the lack of feminist courses (less than one percent) that were being taught about Black women in Women's Studies classrooms. Intersectionality has since grown in popularity, having been used in prominent feminist theory writings and actions (McCall, 2005; Naples, 2016). The inclusion and use of intersectionality in the classroom are often imbedded in the textbooks used, cultural artifacts provided, and classroom discussions facilitated by the instructor (Naples, 2016).

Ranked as one of the top concepts learned by WGS students, the teaching of intersectionality within the WGS classroom assists students in "discerning the importance of interlocked oppressions" (Berger & Radeloff, 2014, p. 166). Intersectionality, "argues that individuals can locate their lived realities in relation to how structural forces and systems of oppression create and maintain differences based on socially constructed identities" (Berger & Guidroz, 2009, p. 1). Students can also use the concept to help them understand others and the

complexity of their situations by examining social structures and institutions of oppression.

Berger and Radeloff (2014) stated, “Analysis and activism are strengthened by an attention to approaching problems through an intersectional lens” (p. 151). As Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall (2013) stated, intersectional praxis can and has been used to “demand greater economic justice for low-income women of color,” to legally advocate for policies that seek to “remedy gender and racial discrimination,” and to fight for the abolishment of “prisons, immigration restrictions, and military interventions that are nominally neutral with respect to race/ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, and nation but are in fact disproportionately harmful to communities of color and to women and gays in those communities” (p. 786). It is only when an issue is in full view that it can be assessed and addressed.

Feminist Praxis

Borne out of feminist theory, teachings within the WGS classroom are expected to be socially and theoretically responsible but also applicable (Weber, 2010). Praxis, or the application of learning to action, has been a key component in feminist teaching. Theory to praxis is often facilitated through class activities and discussions, assignments, projects, guest speakers, and service-learning opportunities. Feminist praxis is fostered in the classroom to use during the course, across the curriculum, and following graduation. Most frequently, praxis is encouraged through an individual course or an assignment (DeMuth, 2011). While some instructors may believe the practice to be valuable, the dedication of an entire semester to the implementation of praxis is less common. In this context, activism is often sought out as a way for students to implement the knowledge they have gained through a WGS education.

Activism. Founded in response to the oppressive treatment of women, WGS academic programs have long been the home of resistance (Wood, 2012). WGS instructors have tended to

emphasize the importance of allowing students to express their thoughts and opinions while developing open-mindedness through scholarly, critical thinking. Simply put, the ultimate goal is to encourage social transformation through activism and celebration of ethnic, racial, class, sexual orientation, gender, age, and ability differences (DeMuth, 2011; Stake, 2006; Weber, 2010). While students may not be aware of the change occurring, complete engagement in the action often leads to thoughtful reflections on the part of the student.

WGS teaching emphasizes meaning and connection making across university curriculum, as well as political and social contexts. Students are encouraged to apply what they learn in the classrooms and to engage in social activism (Johnson & Luhmann, 2016; Stake & Hoffman, 2001). This encouragement is presented in many forms. Some WGS courses are created specifically to engage students in activism whereas other instructors may incorporate activism into an individual assignment or group project requiring class collaboration (DeMuth, 2011). Ethical activism involves a complex set of skills and deep levels of emotional maturity. Successful activism requires historical contextual knowledge, public speaking, organizing skills, empathic care, and the ability to engage effectively with others (Bernardo & Baranovich, 2016). Classes, projects, or assignments focused on activism introduce the students to the concept and history of activism, stress their potential to be actors for social transformation, and critically reflect on previous strategies for change. While there are many types of activism such as service learning, civic engagement, volunteerism, and mobilization, the goal is to produce lifelong, confident activists capable of sharing the information they learn in the classroom with others to promote equity (Bernardo & Baranovich, 2016; Brennan & Naidoo, 2008; Eudey, 2012; Johnson & Luhmann, 2016; Stake, 2006). The knowledge shared in WGS classrooms is powerful; stressing student responsibility in creating change empowers students to act.

Activism in online classes. Over 31% of college students take at least one online course during their undergraduate career (Eudey, 2012). Online class registrations are on the rise, and WGS is far from resistant to the changing face of “the classroom.” In fact, many studies have found feminist pedagogy can be successfully employed in online learning environments. Since its foundation, feminist activism has experienced many waves, each with its own unique approach, relative to the time period and resources available, to creating needed change (Dayton & Levenstein, 2012). Technological advances in recent decades have made such a considerable effect on the way individuals engage with activism, many scholars have disputed over whether the fourth wave is upon us (Eudey, 2012). Online social activism is more accessible now than ever. For many students, it is also more desirable than more traditional or historical approaches to seeking out change. Students taking online classes are believed to be in a better position to engage with online activism as many organizations and individuals are developing online presences and platforms through the utilization of social networks (Eudey, 2012; Velasquez & LaRose, 2015). Online activism has the potential to provide students with the opportunity to work with others with whom collaboration would otherwise be too costly or too inconvenient.

While the ethnic diversity of online courses mirrors face-to-face classrooms, research shows LGBT students are more likely to self-disclose their sexuality or gender identity in online courses (Eudey, 2012). Eudey also noted that WGS instructors reported more male students enrolling in their online courses than their face-to-face classes. Taking into consideration the apparent positive difference online WGS course offerings make for student registration and behavior, online courses may be even more ideal for encouraging activism in terms of marginalized students or students who avoid engaging in classroom discussions. Online courses designed with students with disabilities in mind can further the success of online classes for all

their users (Burghstahler, 2003). Accommodating this growing population in higher education may include providing captioned videos and alternative texts that allow for students to search out key words and phrases (Edmonds, 2004). Online student activism assigned by online WGS courses may include the creation or digitizing of educational materials, circulating materials through social networks and websites, or working with organizations or individuals through online venues in support of a specific cause or political agenda (Eudey, 2012; Velasquez & LaRose, 2015). As individuals and groups participate more in online activism, they receive positive reinforcement from others and become more likely than not to experience an increase in both their online capabilities but also their ability to influence and create change offline as well (Velasquez & LaRose, 2015). Instead of the computer becoming a tool of social isolation, online students are given a safe space to discuss and work with others effectively.

Leaving the WGS Classroom

Through the use, to varying degrees, of feminist theory, feminist pedagogy, intersectionality, feminist praxis, and activism, WGS students gain and strengthen many skills. Literature regarding these learning outcomes can be organized into two categories: academic and personal.

Academic

Generally speaking, WGS explores the relationships between gender and social, political, economic, historical, and cultural constructions and their influences on an individual's lived experiences (Wood, 2012; Wood, 2015). Oftentimes, these relationships are comprised of an oppressed people lacking the same access to resources and rights as a more privileged population. Given the nature of oppression and discrimination, the field of WGS does not focus on the influence of gender discreetly; it explores the intersectionality of identity, that calls for the

inclusion of race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, ability, religion, and sexuality of an individual as well (Dayton & Levenstein, 2012; DeMuth, 2011; Wood, 2012, 2015). Students are not only expected to be able to identify avenues of discrimination; they are encouraged to look for the connective tissue that somewhat binds experiences to an individual, evoking intersectional thinking.

Students are encouraged to draw upon the knowledge they are gaining both inside and outside of their classroom to find meaningful connections are made across disciplines through various methods of evaluation and assessment. It is because of the interdisciplinarity of the field WGS is able to impart upon its student the knowledge of disciplines, higher-order cognitive skills, and communication skills through student curiosity, openness, and experience (Spelt et al., 2009). WGS students are expected to be able to demonstrate knowledge of the differences between sex and gender and should be able to highlight women's contributions in history, politics, and culture. Students should be able to explain how women's experiences may differ based on their age, race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, or sex and recognize sexist, racist, and classist language and actions. Students are also taught to comprehend the social constructions of gender and privilege while engaging in critical self-reflection as well as the decades of activism that have worked to bring them to an end (Levin, 2007).

Many of the skills associated with a WGS education tend to be bound to the mind and one's thinking. WGS students should be able to demonstrate competence in applying cross-cultural knowledge and considering multiple points of view through the use of critical thinking. Students are expected to be able to construct evidence supported arguments while also evaluating and interpreting numerous sources of information. They must be able to communicate effectively through their writing but also through speech while connecting knowledge and

experiences relevant to gender issues (Levin, 2007). The accomplished learning outcomes become most evident in the quality of the classroom discussions and also in the students' finished works, ranging from traditional written papers to creative projects and group collaborations (Berger & Radeloff, 2014; Wood, 2012, 2015). Awareness of women's and gender issues are only a part of WGS. Being able to successfully communicate them to others shows a deeper understanding.

Research has shown that upon the completion of a WGS course, 69% of students indicated a 50% chance they would engage with feminist activism (Stake and Rose, 1994). Most interestingly, however, after a nine-month follow-up 85% of students had participated in at least one while 71% had participated in at least two activist efforts. Furthermore, 34% of the students reported applying the knowledge they gained in their WGS class(es) to inform others of social issues. Most importantly, findings such as these have failed to be replicated in studies using non-WGS courses or in courses taught by non-WGS instructors (Malkin & Stake, 2004; Stake & Hoffman, 2001; Stake, Roades, Rose, Ellis, & West, 1994). It is evident the learning that takes place in WGS courses is long-lasting and transformative; it is specific to the feminist ideals and identity work brought forth by the course content.

Personal

Though it is not a goal of WGS, it is a notable moment when a student begins to identify as a feminist during their higher education career. Thus far, WGS classrooms have been successful in teaching intersectional, critical, and interdisciplinary thinking, communication, and application of feminist ideals while also enhancing a number of personal attributes in their students, including self-efficacy, confidence, and attitudes.

Self-efficacy. By adopting a feminist identity and pursuing feminist values, students become more willing to engage in social activism and display a greater sense of self-efficacy (Kelly & Breinlinger, 1995; Zucker, 2004). Self-efficacy in this context has been defined as the belief in the necessity and importance of contributing to the success of an organization or movement (Markowitz, 1998; Zajacova, Lynch, & Espenshade, 2005). Studies have shown that once students identify as feminists, they see their actions as being important for the success of feminism and the bettering of society.

Those who endorse feminist attitudes without any claim to a feminist identity have been found to be far less likely to engage in activism and do not report an increase in their self-efficacy (Eisele & Stake, 2008). These findings illustrate the influence of a feminist identity, the need for a clear understanding of what a feminist is and what values they uphold, and the actions done in the name of feminism. It is also important to note the influence on student self-efficacy was not merely the effect of claiming a new identity. The relationship between students and self-efficacy was strongest when a feminist-identified individual was committed to engaging in activism. The positive change experienced by students in a WGS course in terms of increased self-efficacy has not been found in non-WGS courses (Stake & Gerner, 1987; Stake & Hoffman, 2001; Stake et al., 1994). Each academic course available through a university offers students new learning opportunities and benefits; however, it appears the gains involved in studying WGS are truly unique.

Psychologists have identified self-efficacy as an important variable in physical and mental health (Gecas, 1989). Research has shown high self-efficacy has many positive wellness benefits for the individual in terms of psychological health, creativity, cognitive flexibility, improved problem-solving and coping skills, higher self-esteem, and a greater involvement in

political processes. These elements are capable of assisting American college students in achieving the American values such as self-reliance, individualism, freedom, mastery, and personal achievement. Longitudinal studies have also shown a positive correlation between self-efficacy and academic, social, self-regulatory, achievement, and prosocial behavior (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1996; Bassi, Steca, Delle Fave, & Caprara, 2007). Self-efficacy not only increases a student's likelihood of becoming healthy and successful, it also helps to defend the individual against the negative influences of anxiety and depression experienced by many (Abramson, Seligman, Teasdale, 1978; Bandura et al., 1996; Lewinsohn, Mischel, Chaplin, & Barton, 1980). Given the relationship between WGS, self-efficacy, and student wellbeing, early exposure to WGS courses may increase students' (especially minority students') ability to battle negative influences they will likely experience while adjusting to life on a university campus.

Self-efficacy has played a vital role in the early adjustment of first-year college students. Research focusing on first-year students has shown self-efficacy has both directly and indirectly influenced student academic performance and personal adjustment to college life (Chemers, Hu, & Garcia, 2001). In this context, self-efficacy was strongly related to the students' beliefs concerning their ability to adjust to the new changes and demands of being a college student. Furthermore, confident students with high self-efficacy have shown signs of working harder, persisting longer, and a better use of learning and problem-solving strategies. Enrolling in a WGS course can provide students with the environment, tools, and skills needed for their personal, social, and academic growth and success.

Confidence. Students who have completed a WGS class have also shown higher rates of activism, enhanced self-confidence and assertiveness, heightened awareness of sexism and forms

of discrimination, as well as an increased tolerance of others different from themselves. Studies have shown approximately 29% of WGS students believed the course(s) enhanced their self-confidence, 23% believed the experience increased their assertiveness, 23% adopted non-stereotypical behaviors as a result of the course content, and 57.1% reported becoming more aware of sexism and forms of discrimination (Stake, 2006; Stake & Gerner, 1987; Stake & Malkin, 2003; Stake et al., 1994). It is also important to note these findings were not replicated in non-WGS courses (Eisele & Stake, 2008; Kelly & Breinlinger, 1995; Stake & Gerner, 1987; Stake & Hoffman, 2001; Stake, et al., 1994; Zucker, 2004). The outcomes of a WGS education surpass memorization and recitation and rather stress the need to integrate the new or enhanced knowledge into the way one lives their life.

Attitudes. Scott, Richards, and Wade (1977) utilized a pretest/posttest design to explore the impact of a WGS class and found students held more liberal attitudes towards women's marital, intellectual, vocational, and sex roles upon the completion of the course. The control group used in the study showed no such attitudinal change. Bargad and Hyde (1991) found by measuring student attitudes toward women's roles and feminist ideals students in a WGS course showed a progressively stronger development of a feminist identity than those on a waiting list for the course. Additionally, Ruble, Croke, Frieze, and Parsons (1975) utilized a sex-role attitude inventory and found WGS student attitudes were more likely to change than the control in the areas of traditional roles of women, non-stereotypical beliefs, and perceptions of sex discrimination.

Though most students have reported feeling positively about their experience and change, many noted they would not have initially taken a WGS had it not been required (Brown, 2011; Rankin & Reason, 2005). WGS does not appear to have issues with students' attitudes in the

classroom; it is getting them there that is challenging. Students who were required to complete a WGS course expressed feeling as though the course materials had changed the way they thought about themselves and the world at large (Brown, 2011). These students also indicated while they enjoyed the course, it was unlikely they would have enrolled in it of their own volition (Rankin & Reason, 2005). While students may benefit from the lessons of diversity inclusive courses, they may not initially seek them out unless required by the university.

Teaching in WGS and Higher Education

That which occurs in the classroom does not happen on its own. Courses, class sessions, and teaching approaches are purposefully designed, adopted, and implemented by higher education professionals. To their students, an instructor's work takes place in the classroom, however, a closer examination of the role of professionals in higher education reveals far more than this.

Feminist Pedagogy

Although is not required of them, many WGS instructors draw from feminist pedagogy to inform their teaching practices. Early formulations of feminist pedagogy focused on the imbalance of power at higher education institution (Shreswbury, 1987). Feminist pedagogy was meant to favor the individual and collectively empower female students, sometimes to the extent of discouraging male students in the classroom (Boxer, 1998; Klein, 1983; Mahoney, 1983). This exclusive ideology was founded through a feminist lens that viewed the university as a site of patriarchal power that failed to include the experiences and perceptions of women (Freeman & Jones, 1980). While male professionals still greatly outnumber females in higher education and often receive higher wages, WGS has been one of the few academic spaces in which academic mentoring and support for female faculty is fostered (Flood, 2011). WGS has remained a female

dominated field, drawing in female scholars from across disciplines where gender equality may not necessarily be their greatest concern.

Through the common but not inherent utilization of feminist pedagogy, WGS instructors often position themselves in an authority position with their students rather than over them, becoming less instructional and more collaborative in the learning opportunities (Bignell, 1996; Gore, 1993). Sometimes physically restructuring the classroom arrangement, feminist pedagogical methods stress the importance of method as well the content in the teaching role (Weber, 2010). Feminist teachings encourage students to critically analyze social structures and practices they have personally experienced as well as those foreign to them (Hassel & Nelson, 2012; Stake & Hoffman, 2000). This pedagogical practice places emphasis on empowering students' voices and value in experiential knowledge and encourages collaboration and creating community (Kishimoto & Mwangi, 2009). Historically, feminist pedagogy has drawn upon other cross-disciplinary critical practices such as historical analysis, theorizing, synthesizing, reflection, narration, description, and argument to address students' prejudice and encourage the development of change agents (Case, 2007; Hassel & Launius, 2017; hooks, 1994; Lewis, 1990). By encouraging students to personally engage with each of these areas, feminist pedagogy aims to increase empathy and understanding in order to create change.

A classroom guided by feminist pedagogy will often incorporate teamwork, student-centered classes, active discussions, journal writing, knowledge application, and varied assignments for differing learning styles (Levin, 2007). These approaches are designed to stray from traditionalist models of teaching, like the banking model that many disciplines have renounced, and places the students as an authority in the classroom (Berger & Radeloff, 2014; Freire, 2000; Weber, 2010). This requires the students to actively engage in discussions and

group work to successfully navigate the course and its objectives. Shrewsbury (1987) referred to this process as students becoming responsible toward one another and the subject matter or, as Adrienne Rich (1995) put it, “claiming an education” (p. 233). At times, a WGS instructor may need to disrupt the power balance to mentor students towards awareness of their own privilege or lack thereof (Turpin, 2007). While large class sizes serve as a challenge for feminist pedagogy, online courses have been successful in fostering students’ ability to take an active role in their education with the use of discussion boards and chat-classrooms.

Hoffman and Stake (1998) found four common threads in the major pedagogical feminist writings strongly endorsed by WGS instructors: (a) participatory learning, (b) validation of personal experience, (c) encouragement of social understanding and activism, and (d) development of critical thinking and open-mindedness. These four dimensions were consistently significant regardless of the instructor’s class level or size and were not found to be as stressed in non-WGS classes.

Faculty Life

As employees of a university, faculty members take on many differing responsibilities and expectations. University expectations of faculty members often differ because of rank (contract, adjunct, tenure-seeking, or tenured). Generally speaking, faculty members in higher education are often expected, on varying levels, to teach, serve, and conduct research. Institution type, discipline, rank, experience, race, and gender also influence to what extent the following expectations affect higher education professionals (Mamiseishvili, Miller, & Lee, 2016; Ward, 2003).

Ward (2003) categorized expected faculty performance as internal and external service.

Internal service, in this context, referred to “the service to the institution as a means to conduct institutional business and service to the discipline as a means to maintain disciplinary associations and their work” (Ward, 2003, p. 1). Here, internal service includes teaching, research, and shared governance. Measurement of each of these tasks often differs between disciplines and institutions. However, some researchers have attempted to standardize this process. Teaching responsibilities can be measured by the level of courses that are being taught (graduate and undergraduate), number of credit hours being taught each week, number of hours spent in contact with students, or number of hours spent each week teaching graduate and undergraduate levels, respectively (Mamiseishvili & Rosser, 2010). While working with students, faculty members may be called upon to act as advisor, counselor, or a professional reference (Ward, 2003). Gender, sexual, and racial minority professionals are more so sought out to conduct this interpersonal work than their peers especially if they are working at a primarily White institution (Guarino & Borden, 2017; Ward, 2003; Wood, Hilton, & Nevarez, 2015). Scholars have referred to this as cultural taxation and hidden workload (Padilla, 1994; Kolodny, 1998). This often emotionally laborious work, while expected, is not regularly rewarded.

Research efforts may be measured by the number of articles, books, reports, book reviews, and book chapters that a faculty member publishes as well as presentations given within a set time span. As professionals in a disciplinary field, faculty members may also be expected to contribute to professional associations and organizations (Ward, 2003). This membership and service may come in the form of serving on committees and review boards. This work is rarely monetarily compensated. Shared governance duties often fall under the category of unpaid tasks (both on and off campus as well as committee appointments. Finsen

(2002) identified three areas in which faculty members work as institutional citizens (a) academic oversight, (b) institutional governance, and (c) institutional support. As institutional citizens, faculty member may be expected to assist with program reviews or accreditation processes, strategic planning, administrative hiring, student recruitment, and alumni relations. Faculty members may also take on administrative or quasi-administrative roles coordinating academic programs or serving as department chairs (Berberet, 2002). The difference herein, however, being that a department chair is a paid position that is not categorized as an act of service unlike some quasi-administrative roles.

External service was defined as “a means for institutions to communicate to multiple external audiences that it is that higher education does to meet societal needs. External service takes many forms, including extensions, consulting, service-learning, and community and civic service” (Ward, 2003, p. 1). Extension agents serve as liaisons between the university and its surrounding community through outreach initiatives. While consulting is not commonly required of faculty members, many seek out the opportunity to apply theory to practice. Faculty members may also do so through service-learning and community-based action research. Though these external service areas are less likely to be required of faculty members, overall service plays an instrumental part in evaluations for retention, promotion, or tenure.

Summary

I compiled the literature through the use of multiple sources including electronic databases (ERIC, Academic Search Premiere, Web of Science, and PsycINFO) and public search engines. This traditional review of literature includes refereed journal articles, books, and conference publications. Chapter Two was organized into four sections WGS in Higher Education, WGS in the Classroom, Leaving the WGS Classroom, and Teaching in WGS and

Higher Education. While WGS in Higher Education focused on feminist theory, Women's Studies, organization/structure, WGS in the Classroom highlighted the curriculum, feminist pedagogy, intersectionality, and feminist praxis commonly used in the field. Leaving the WGS Classroom drew attention to the personal and academic learning outcomes associated with a feminist education. The final section gave a brief and general summary of faculty workloads in terms of internal and external service.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

The purpose of this study was to understand the experiences and efforts of instructors while teaching for a WGS program or department in a conservative state where the culture challenges the core of the academic discipline. Throughout this study, a “WGS instructor” included adjunct, contract, affiliate, full-time, and tenured employees who were teaching a course that was offered by a WGS program or department during the time of the study. This chapter presents an overview of the methods used to gain understanding of the elements that surround the research questions.

Research Design

One’s research design is influenced by the nature of the research questions as well as the perspective and membership of the researcher (Creswell, 2013; Hathaway, 1995; Smith, 1983). I utilized a qualitative, interpretive phenomenological approach in order to address the questions (a) how do instructors in four-year institutions of higher education in Indiana experience teaching WGS courses, (b) how do WGS instructors prepare their syllabi, lesson plans, and course materials prior to the start of the course, (c) how do WGS instructors prioritize which lessons and topics are addressed throughout the semester, and (d) how do WGS instructors facilitate learning in and outside of their classrooms?

The purpose of the study and selected research questions placed value on the perceptions and interpretation of WGS instructors. By asking the participants to engage in recollection, evaluation, and interpretation, I employed an interpretivist framework informed by a constructivist epistemology that rejects objectivity (Crotty, 1998). This qualitative approach required the participant to engage in meaning-making during the interview process by asking

them to make sense of their own experience with the phenomenon. This use of phenomenology complies with the research questions and purpose in that both focus on the lived experiences of individuals. Phenomenology was created as an attempt to capture and understand the ethos or crux of a particular experience (Creswell, Hanson, Plano Clark, & Morales, 2007; van Manen, 2016). By putting aside their preconceived notions and through the utilization of probing questions, phenomenology has been used to help researchers consider a phenomenon as if it were their first exposure to it.

In employing this framework and design, the researcher is to establish good rapport with the participants and, if possible, become deeply absorbed within the phenomenon (Creswell, 1994; Powdermaker, 1966). Meaning was created by both the participant and the researcher. The end result of the work is not only dependent on the shared experiences of the participants but also the level of my engagement and commitment. In this process, I became an equal part of the finished product as those I set out to understand (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

I also engaged in inductive analysis. Inductive analysis is the search and discovery of connections and relationships among similarities in a given data set (Thomas, 2006). When using inductive analysis, the researcher codes the data, categorizes the codes into themes, explores the relationship between the themes presented in the data set, and then interprets the findings through their selected theoretical perspective (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Gray, 2013; Wolcott, 1994). To support the trustworthiness of the study, I employed researcher reflexivity, audit trail, prolonged engagement in the field, and thick, rich description (Bodgan & Biklen, 1992; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Denzin, 1989; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Geertz, 1973).

Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis

The focus of this study was the experiences of the instructors. This implied the “truth” being sought out was subjective and therefore fell under the qualitative theoretical perspective of interpretivism. Interpretivism is the search for cultural and historical interpretations of life and utilization of inductive research approaches (Crotty, 1998; Gray, 2013; Saunders, Thornhill, & Lewis, 2007). An interpretive phenomenological approach (IPA) aims to engage with individuals’ reflections of an experience (Larkin & Thompson, 2012; Smith et al., 2009). Researchers using this method of analysis are often interested in the significance or meaning that an experience takes on for the people involved therein. More simply put, the researcher looks for how the individual has made sense of the phenomenon.

IPA is informed by hermeneutics or the theory of interpretation (Smith et al., 2009). The participant is engaged in making sense of their own experience through reflection, thinking, and feeling. Information shared regarding an experience is dependent on the participants’ openness and honesty and therefore requires the researcher to also make sense of what is being shared with them. This additional interpretation engages the researcher in a double hermeneutic (Smith et al., 2009; Wagstaff et al., 2014). IPA focuses on each individual’s experience with the phenomenon and aims to understand how they have come to make sense of it as a separate source of information. In this way, IPA is idiographic. Small, homogeneous samples of approximately three to six participants allow for IPA studies to express part of the experience of each participant. In doing so, similarities and differences between cases can be detailed. Additionally, IPA does not rely on simple reporting methods but rather a multi-level method and analysis. Only after the individualized evaluation is completed should general claims regarding sense-making and the experience be addressed.

The findings of an IPA study are reported in a narrative account wherein the researcher's interpretation is presented to the reader and supported by excerpts from the participants. With larger samples, however, data analysis may shift, to varying degrees, to assessing the data as a whole and focusing on patterns and connections. In this event, the use of examples from the individual interviews for group-level patterns or connections is what constitutes it as an IPA study. Former uses of IPA in dissertation research concerning education have studied the: success of a peer mentoring project in in terms of mentoring-influence-by-rational learning (Chorba, 2013), experiences of full-time, nontraditional community-college students with children (Peterson, 2014), and experiences of academic identity in liberal arts during a the new age of managerialism (Fleming, 2015). IPA has also been used to understand the experiences of social work faculty who have worked with under-prepared students in Baccalaureate Social Work (BSW) programs (Richardson, 2015), experiences of student mentees and faculty mentors in a faculty mentoring program at a predominantly White, public university in the Midwest (Phelps-Ward, 2015), experiences of Title IX investigators on a mid-sized public university (Peters, 2016). Most recently IPA was used to examine the lived experiences of middle school teachers and the effect of homelessness in their classrooms (Smart, 2018).

Questioning. Through this approach, I asked open-ended questions and engaged my participants in purposeful and meaningful reflection on an experience that may otherwise be lost in the typical day-to-day series of events (Smith et al., 2009). Throughout this process, the participants reflected, thought, and were emotionally engaged as they worked through what meaning the occurrence has had in their experience. To further my understanding of their experiences, I utilized follow-up questions or requested the participant use more detail in their

explanation, allowing me to see how were making meaning of the various elements involved in the phenomenon.

Collecting. IPA data collection often uses semi-structured interviews (Smith et al., 2009). During these interviews, the conversation is able to flow flexibly, and the participant has the power to steer towards and away from topics that are covered or discussed. This approach allows for the experience to be expressed in the participant's own terms in their own way. Recordings of these conversations are then transcribed, preparing them for analysis. The use of recordings and transcriptions created by me assist in increasing the reliability of the final qualitative work.

Interpreting. While not a required element of IPA research, my position as an insider was useful. In a sense, IPA requires the researcher to interpret a participant's experience while they themselves work to find their own meanings (Smith et al., 2009). This double hermeneutic process captures the importance of the researcher and their understanding of the participants' experiences. Though limited by the amount of information provided or shared by the participant during the data collection, a researcher's insider identity grants them further insight regarding the data and the meanings created within it. For example, having worked in the same field as one's participants an insider researcher may be able to better understand a participant's experiences than an outsider might.

Research Setting

As mentioned in Chapter One, some common characteristics of conservative states are high religiosity, restrictive abortion policies, attempts to ban same-sex marriage, and abstinence-only sex education (Cavazos-Rehg et al., 2012; Oppenheimer et al., 2014). These traits, along with party distributions, wage gap, and other facets, form the influencing culture of each state in

the US. In order to establish Indiana as being a conservative state with a conservative culture, the following areas are presented for support of the use of this region for the research setting.

In 2014, The Pew Research Center recorded Indiana as having been tied with four other states (Wyoming, Florida, Maryland, and Nebraska) as the 22nd most religious state, overall. Based on an overall index, 63% of Indiana adults said they believed in God with absolute certainty, 54% are “highly religious,” 53% said religion is very important to their lives, and 52% said they pray daily. According to this report, the most prominent religions in Indiana were Christianity (72%) and Catholicism (18%). In 2014, uproar surged when an Indiana bakery, Cakery 111, refused to make and sell a cake to a same-sex couple for their commitment ceremony (Heriot, 2016). At that point in time, Indiana still upheld the Defense of Marriage Act that limited marriage to a union between one man and one woman (Johnson, 1997). The following year the Governor of Indiana at the time (now Vice President of the United States), Mike Pence, signed into law the Indiana Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA). The act permitted individuals and companies within the state of Indiana “to use free exercise of religion and conscience objections as defenses against charges of sexual orientation discrimination” (Murray, 2017, p. 302). The signing of RFRA also followed the 2015 ruling by the Supreme Court that same-sex marriage bans were unconstitutional. RFRA served as a marker of the religious stance of Indiana, showing that religious freedom is more greatly valued than the fair treatment of the LGBT community.

The following year, 2016, Mike Pence “signed into law a ban on abortion in circumstances in which ‘genetic abnormalit[ies]’ were detected (the law was recently enjoined by a federal district court” (Murray, 2017, p. 302). The same year, he also signed a law requiring facilities that provided abortions pay for the burial or cremation of aborted, furthering the

financial and emotional burden for abortion-seeking individuals. Additionally, Pence approved Targeted Regulation of Abortion Providers (TRAP) laws that required an 18-hour waiting period as well as a mandatory ultrasound be performed prior to the abortion. Pence's stance and actions to "imbue embryos and fetuses with legal personhood" serve as evidence that Indiana does not deem an individual's physical and mental health as a priority over the birth of new life (p. 302). Utilizing 13 points of investigation, researchers have found Indiana to be one of five states with the most restrictive abortion policies in the nation (Medoff, 2016). Post-viability bans, spousal consent or notification, insurance restrictions, counseling bans, partial-birth abortion bans, second trimester hospitalization, 12-week abortion bans, medical funding restrictions, waiting period, informed consent, two-visit laws, targeted regulation of abortion providers (TRAP) laws, and parental involvement laws were used to score each state. On a one to 100 scale, the most pro-life being a score of 100, Indiana tied Kentucky with a score of 76.25, following Louisiana and South Carolina's scores of 78.75, and Mississippi's score of 80.00.

Indiana Code 20-34-3-17 Sec. 17. (a) states:

The state board shall provide information stressing the moral aspects of abstinence from sexual activity in any literature that it distributes to students and young adults concerning available methods for the prevention of acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS).

The literature must state that the best way to avoid AIDS is for young people to refrain from sexual activity until they are ready as adults to establish, in the context of marriage, a mutually faithful monogamous relationship. (Indiana General Assembly, 2015, para. 1)

At present, Indiana sex education instructors are required to stress the morality of abstinence and sexual activity within the confines of marriage if they wish to also address safe sex practices.

This, however, may be undergoing a change as a bill was introduced in January 2018 that could

restrict sex education even further. Senate Bill 65 would require all school corporations to present instructional material to the students' parents or guardians of non-emancipated minors. Indiana schools would also be required to provide a consent form that summarizes the content and nature of the instruction of human sexuality including sexual activity, sexual orientation, and gender identity. The consent form would have to be returned to the school with either consent for the instruction or declination. This bill would prevent the teaching of sexual activity, sexual orientation, and gender identity if a parent or guardian consent is not given. If passed, conservative parents could lawfully keep their children from learning about LGBT identities, gender fluidity, and non-marital sexual activity in school that may contradict or challenge their moral or religious beliefs.

According to the Pew Research Center party affiliation report of 2014, Indiana was tied with Wisconsin and Ohio for the 18th most Republican-leaning state in the U.S. It was the 11th least Democrat-leaning state and was tied with New Hampshire and Hawaii for having the 11th largest non-learning population. As reported in the 2016 American Community Survey Data, Indiana's wage gap was one of the fourth largest in the country, having tied Alabama, North Dakota, and Oklahoma at an average of 74 cents for women to every dollar a man-made (National Women's Law Center, 2017). The greatest wage gap reported was 70 cents to each dollar that was attributed to the state of Louisiana.

The prioritization of religious freedom, anti-LGBT efforts, strict abortion laws, restrictive sex education parameters, heavy republican population, and large wage gap qualify Indiana as a conservative state. Its ranking amongst other U.S. states and political action to support these stated interests, may make Indiana especially challenging for those working who advocate for feminist causes and teach feminist ideals such as bodily autonomy, LGBT rights, inclusive sex

education, and equal pay for equal work. Regionally speaking, Indiana sits between Illinois, Ohio, Michigan, and Kentucky. Politically, Indiana has been reported to be more Republican-leaning than all but Ohio, have stricter abortion laws than all but Kentucky, and have a larger wage gap and less Democratic-leaning than all its surrounding states (Cavazos-Rehg et al., 2012; Medoff, 2016; National Women's Law Center, 2017; Oppenheimer et al., 2014).

The above state attributes contribute to the limiting of bodily autonomy, restrict the sharing of information regarding safe-sex practices, support the discrimination of sexual and gender minorities, or suggest gender inequality practices. These documented elements challenge the core of the field of WGS, which is equality. While these characteristics are meant to substantiate Indiana as a conservative state, they are not unique traits. Indiana is not the most religious state in the nation. It does not have the most restrictive abortion laws. Its sex education restrictions still allow for safe-sex practices to be voiced, and the wage gap is not the largest recorded. Indiana is not so unique that its citizen's actions become obscure. Conservative culture can be found, to varying degrees, in many states with similar or harsher laws and restrictions. It is for this reason that Indiana and the teaching efforts to resist this have the potential to offer a number of applicable techniques to others in similar positions.

Sample

Choosing an approach for a study not only requires asking the appropriate questions but also using the necessary methods to understand its answers through intentional data collection. Typically, IPA studies are conducted with a smaller sample of unique individuals whose experiences are more idiographic than generalizable (Smith et al., 2009). The field of WGS offers up numerous possibilities for reasonably homogenous and unique samples of this larger population whether it be by institution, geographical location, professional status, or institution

type. While the field of WGS could provide a number of inclusion parameters based on instructor experience, types of courses taught, or a number of other variables, I chose something a bit closer to home. Following IRB approval, I collected data from WGS instructors teaching at four-year public institutions with undergraduate enrollments of more than 20,000 in the state of Indiana (Appendix A). This population included four institutions that have earned the Carnegie Foundation classification of high research activity and high undergraduate enrollment. The majority of these schools' undergraduate profiles are full-time, selective, and have low transfer-in rates. Only one institution in the sample was categorized as non-primarily residential.

My decision to use such limiting parameters was influenced by the IPA methods that have deemed a smaller sample as more desirable. Smaller samples assist the researcher in focusing on gaining greater depth in their analysis (Marshall, 1996). While utilizing a single institution would provide a smaller sample, I believe the value of including the four largest intuitions outweighs the convenience of a single-institution study. I interviewed three instructors from each of the institutions with the exception of the non-primarily residential institution where I was only able to interview two individuals. Given that universities often enforce their own criteria for teaching on their campuses, my own criterion focused primarily on the active teaching status of the instructor. This parameter included any individual actively teaching at least one WGS (or related name) course at any of the four institutions during the semester in which the interview took place.

Recruitment

I identified eligible individuals through their employment within the selected universities and their active teaching status. I used public university websites that listed offered courses and their instructors to form a list of potential participants. I also collected the contact information

for each of the individuals from the universities' public websites and directories. According to these websites, each institution offered approximately 10 to 15 courses through their WGS program or department each semester with some instructors teaching multiple WGS courses. Utilizing criterion sampling, I contacted every instructor listed as teaching a WGS course during either of the semesters in which the interviews took place (Patton, 2002). This recruitment strategy casted a wider net than the stated desired sample size to account for the number of professionals who may not respond, did not wish to participate, or may not be able to commit to time requirement of the study.

Recruitment efforts began during the 2018 summer semester and carried into the following fall 2018 semester to meet the goal of having at least two participants from each university participate in the study. Participants I had already contacted during the summer semester were not contacted a second time if their teaching schedule meant they were eligible for both recruitment periods. I contacted the instructors via a personalized recruitment email on either June 20, 2018 or August 1, 2018. The recruitment email introduced me, the purpose of the study, inclusion parameters, time commitment for participation, and IRB contact information (Appendix B) (Patton, 1987). In total, I contacted 46 individuals. Eight potential participants were contacted during the summer semester and 38 during the following fall semester. Of these 46, 23 responded to the email either declining participation, asking for further clarification, or agreeing to participate. Individuals who responded with a declination often cited feeling too inexperienced to participate or being physically unavailable to participate in the study due to travel plans. I provided the individuals who were willing to participate with the informed consent (Appendix C) and asked for their availability as well as a preferred location to meet that

had minimal background noise. I confirmed my first participant on June 21, 2018 and my last on September 22, 2018.

Data Collection

After deciding on a mutually agreeable time and location for the interview to take place, I asked the participants to share, as specified in the informed consent, syllabi from all courses being actively taught prior to their interview date and time. I informed individuals who were hesitant to supply these documents that the syllabi were meant to help me prepare for the interview and would only be shared with the chair of the dissertation committee. A number of the participants sent the syllabi from the current semester as well as those from previous semesters. In total, I collected 20 syllabi from the participants prior to their respective interview dates. I used these documents to assist me in constructing potential follow-up questions for participant elaboration during the interview (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). I read the syllabi prior to the interview, familiarizing myself with the policies, assignments, and information provided to the students. This access also allowed me to note unique features of the instructor's teaching that I could later reference during the interview process.

I completed 11 face-to-face interviews that resulted in 16 hours, 52 minutes, and 12 seconds of raw interview data. Interview lengths ranged from nearly two and a half hours to forty-five minutes. As described in the interview protocol (Appendix D), prior to the start of the interview I greeted the participants, thanked them for their time and generosity, and engaged them in light conversation. I then asked the participants to present their signed consent form. If no such form was available, I provided the participant with a new form to complete before continuing with the interview. At the beginning of each interview, I reviewed the informed consent information and gave the participants an opportunity to voice any concerns or questions

they might have. No questions were asked at this time. I used pseudonyms throughout the interview process in order to increase confidentiality. Each individual was asked to provide a name they felt comfortable using prior to the start of any data collection. Upon their request, some of the participants chose a pseudonym at the conclusion of the interview. I wrote the participants' chosen name on my printed interview script and later used it to label the digital recording of the interview. I then asked for my participants' permission to audio record the forthcoming conversation. All the participants agreed to be recorded.

At the start of each interview, I read the purpose statement of the study to the participant. I explained that this was to help keep me and the participant focused during our conversation. Following this, I used a semi-structured interview protocol consisting of open-ended questions regarding the individual's experiences and efforts. These open-ended questions focused primarily on the instructors' (a) experience teaching as well as their (b) preparation, (c) prioritization, and (d) facilitation of learning opportunities as an instructor. The interview questions required the participant to explain, differentiate, evaluate, and examine the effort they put forth prior to the beginning of a semester, when building a course syllabus, and during the teaching process. Throughout each of the four areas (experience, preparation, prioritization, and facilitation), I asked the instructors to reflect on how their responses may be represented in the syllabi they provided to me and their students.

To ensure accuracy during the interview, I took notes as necessary alongside the audio recordings (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Schmidt, 2004). I explained to my participants that they had the power and control to skip questions they did not wish to answer or believed they had already answered. No questions were skipped during this process; however, some questions were answered by referring to previous responses. Towards the end of the

interview script, I re-read the purpose statement to the participant. I did so to remind the participant and myself of the purpose of the meeting and to provide an opportunity to discuss more relevant information or experiences the individuals' wished to share. Before concluding the interview, I collected demographic information regarding the participant's age, time (in years) in higher education, time (in years) in the field of WGS, job title, race, and any other relevant identities. I concluded our time together by thanking the participants for their time and then stopped the recording device.

Interview Questions

To craft appropriate and meaningful interview questions aligned with the research questions, I conducted a self-interview and engaged in peer-debriefing. Because of my insider status, I was able to formulate open-ended questions that addressed each of the four areas of interest: (a) experience, (b) preparation, (c) prioritization, and (d) facilitation of learning opportunities. Using my own experience teaching and building a new course, I reflected on the efforts and experiences I had that would answer the research questions. I utilized syllabi I had designed to guide the production of interview questions regarding choices I had made throughout this process. I created 16 questions and a variety of potential follow-up questions I believed would guide the interviewee to consider various aspects of their efforts and experiences while not leading them to answer in a specific manner. I then met with a fellow WGS instructor at Ball State University and engaged in peer-debriefing during which we discussed my motives and decisions in asking the presented questions. During this process, questions were re-worded for clarity and consistency.

Questions one and two addressed the instructors' overall experience teaching WGS. These questions evoked word association and the provision of examples of experiences that

embody the words chosen by the participants. Questions three through seven focused on the instructors' preparation prior to the start of a semester. These questions involved describing the instructors' teaching philosophy, preparation process, and perceived differences based on course level, topic, size, or location. Questions eight through 11 tackled the instructors' teaching priorities, asking about their decision-making process, influences, and sequencing of the semester. Course level, topic, size, and location were also employed in this questioning. Questions 12 through 15 addressed the instructors' facilitation style, changes over time, and influences of course level, topic, size, or location. Following the completion of the facilitation questions, I re-read the purpose statement to the participant. Question 16, the final interview question, asked the participant to reflect on the interview time and offer any additional information on the discussed areas. This question also allowed the participants to discuss experiences or insights that had not already been addressed or shared.

Transcription

I used the interview audio recordings to transcribe the data verbatim resulting in 492 pages of transcription (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, 2007; Schmidt, 2004). I did so by slowing down the audio recording using an application on my personal computer and typing the dialogue line by line in a Microsoft Word Document. I stored the recorded data files and transcribed interviews on my personal, password-protected computer. I stored printed copies of the transcribed interviews in a locked cabinet in my office when they were not in use. All recordings will be destroyed within five years of the initial interview date. Audio files and transcripts (i.e., raw data) were also housed in a secure Box folder accessible only to the dissertation committee chair and me.

Pilot Interview

I conducted a pilot interview during the summer of 2018 prior to formal data collection with a singular participant who met the criteria of being a WGS instructor in Indiana at one of the four selected universities; however, they were not teaching a WGS course during the semester in which the interview took place. I contacted the participant through personal channels wherein a mutual time and location was agreed upon. According to plan, I collected informed consent from the participant the day of the interview. I was not, however, given access to the participant's syllabi prior to the interview. I used the semi-structured script drafted for my research proposal to conduct the interview. I then transcribed the interview verbatim utilizing a pseudonym for the sake of the participant's confidentiality. Once I completed the transcription, I compared the participant's responses to the expectations I held for the potential yield of the proffered questions. I drafted a reflective memo detailing what modification may be necessary to increase the productivity of the interview time. I electronically shared this reflective memo with my committee chair and later discussed it in a face-to-face meeting.

Outcomes

The pilot participant failed to produce the requested syllabi prior to the interview date and time. The interview was conducted, nonetheless, in a personal university office and lasted one hour 55 minutes and 52 seconds. As the length of the interview may suggest, the responses to the interview questions offered a great deal of insight into the way in which this particular instructor experienced teaching in a conservative state, prepared, prioritized, and facilitated learning opportunities throughout a WGS course. It was my opinion, however, the potential for the conversation was not reached. This limitation of depth, I felt, was a result of not having access to the instructor's course syllabi, not having time to familiarize myself with their written

procedures, and not having time to reflect on the methods of assessment involved in granting students credit for their work.

As the interviewer I felt limited in my ability to ask questions that could better speak to the purpose of the study. Without the requested documentation, the scope of my follow-up questions lacked depth and were solely dependent on the information willingly shared by the participant. This reliance did not grant me the opportunity to note any obvious discrepancies between what was said and what was stated in the course documents, further limiting the quality of the data collected. As a result of the shared reflexive memo and the conversation it spurred between myself and my dissertation chair, no changes were made to the interview script. This process strengthened my resolve that course syllabi were necessary for the study to be conducted as proposed.

Data Analysis

Following the comprehensive and extensive guidelines put forth by Smith et al., (2009), the analysis of the data must include exploration, description, interpretation, and situation of the participants' meaning-making. This can be achieved through reading and re-reading, initial note-taking, developing emergent themes, searching for connections, moving to the next case, and looking for patterns across the cases as a data set. The formal analysis process often begins during transcription as this is the first time the researcher is able to read the data, but subsequent readings are necessary (Creswell, 2003). Reading and re-reading the data allows for the interviewer to become reacquainted with a specific part of the data set and to take notes on unique or intriguing elements of the discussion. As this step is repeated by the researcher across interviews, a collection of notes is formed allowing the researcher to move forward with the process. Initial note taking or noting may include making new notes or revisiting earlier

notes regarding components of the discussions. During this process, I kept a notebook with assigned pages for each participant's data. I added to this notebook throughout the analysis process. Comments can enhance the meaning conveyed in the typed words.

Utilizing the tools in Microsoft Word, I highlighted participant responses and added a "comment" with initial, code-related notes in the right-hand margin as designated by the IPA process (Appendix G) (Landridge, 2007). Informed by a constructivist epistemology, themes are developed from the participants' interpretation of their experiences and efforts, their subjecting meanings, and the researcher's interpretation of these elements (Creswell, 2014). As I moved through each interview, I considered whether the codes I was using were different enough to be considered distinct. I combined codes that appeared to be too similar to one another. These codes and initial note-taking helped me to recognize the emerging themes in each individual interview transcription or case. I then identified connections within each case and formed subthemes. According to Smith et al. (2009), these connections can be identified by abstraction (grouping themes according to their similarities creating a new subtheme), subsumption (identifying one subtheme and grouping like themes underneath it), polarization (looking for oppositional relationships), contextualization (grouping themes by their context), numeration (utilizing the frequency of a theme to detail its importance), and function (grouping themes by their perceived function in the participants' experience). I clustered the emergent themes through abstraction, subsumption, and function to form the subthemes in each case.

Once I identified these subthemes for each participant, I looked for connections across cases in the data set. Subthemes from one interview may be present in others, making a pattern (Smith et al., 2009). These patterns serve as more or less the investigative findings of the work that is being conducted. When looking for these patterns, recurrence becomes important,

a decision may be made that for an emergent or subtheme to be classified as recurrent it must be present in at least a third, or a half, or, most stringently, in all of the participant interviews. Counting like this can be considered one way to enhance the validity of the findings of a large corpus. (pp. 106-107)

Considered a larger study for IPA, I defined a theme as recurrent if it was present in at least nine out of the 11 cases. Analysis resulted in the construction 11 recurrent subthemes (Appendix E). I then grouped these 11 subthemes to show the interconnections between the recurrent group themes as has been suggested for larger samples. From these findings, the reader and I are able to answer the research questions by engaging with the individuals' experiences.

Trustworthiness

I carefully chose each element of this study to increase the likelihood of ethically and responsibly answering the research questions at hand and to support the trustworthiness of the findings. Qualitative researchers utilize a number of procedures to guarantee the accuracy of the work (Creswell, 2013). Researcher reflexivity, thick description, rapport, consistency, and prolonged engagement in the field, as well as other strategies such as recurrence addressed above, are used in the field to produce trustworthy qualitative findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Smith et al., 2009). As the key researcher, I engaged a number of these methods to establish quality in my study.

Researcher Reflexivity

Employing researcher reflexivity, the investigator must begin and conclude the work with a great deal of transparency. This level of transparency requires the researcher to be aware of their own beliefs, expectations, and motives (Creswell, 2014). My background, experiences, and relation to the field and the experience being examined have been presented in Chapter One is an

attempt to begin the process with absolute transparency. Throughout this process, I kept a reflexivity journal where I recorded new or changing beliefs, expectations, and observations throughout the process of collecting, transcribing, and analyzing the data. This reflexivity journal allowed me to record and recall any influences or obstructions I may have brought into the research process for evaluation purposes. The study also concludes with a personal reflection furthering the transparency I wish to share with the reader.

Audit Trail

In addition to the reflexivity journal, I also kept a record of the choices I made and actions I took as the researcher through the study. This record served as an audit trail (Appendix F) and a chronological trace of proceedings from when I received IRB approval, recruitment attempts, scheduled interviews, transcribed interviews, reflexivity journal entries, and the steps taken during data analysis (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Beginning in May of 2018 and continuing until December of 2018, this itemized table shows the evolution of the research over the period of time allotted to and used by me to complete each step of the process.

Prolonged Engagement in the Field

Because I hold an assistantship with the title of graduate assistant for a WGS program and my continuous work in the field, I maintained prolonged engagement in the field that served as an element of dependability for my study (Creswell, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Over the course of this study, I have taught two introduction-level WGS courses at a public, four-year university in the state of Indiana. I also attended the MRGSC held at Indiana University-Bloomington in December and the National Women's Studies Association 2018 conference in Atlanta, Georgia where I was engaged in community and conversations with others in the field.

As an insider, I had access to gatekeepers, some established rapport, and reciprocity that assisted me in gaining the trust of my participants.

Thick, Rich Description

The findings of this study are presented in thick, rich description (Creswell, 2013; Geertz, 1973). Thick description, or the provision of detailed accounts, is used to establish credibility in the study as well as to provide the reader with the necessary information to not only understand but also emotionally and logically connect with the setting, participants, and themes involved (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Denzin, 1989). By providing specific and esoteric details about the participants themselves and their experiences, I aimed to further the credibility of the study and its findings.

Summary

This chapter provided the methodology of this phenomenological study on the experiences of WGS instructors teaching in a conservative state. My decisions regarding the design of the study were informed by the nature of IPA and the aims of qualitative research. The rationale for choosing to conduct an IPA study was given and supported by the research setting, research questions, sampling, data collection, and analysis of the study. Lastly, the quality and elements of trustworthiness were provided with a description of the efforts made to increase the authenticity of the findings.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

To understand the experiences and efforts of the WGS instructors, I conducted an interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA). In this chapter, I introduce my participants and a breakdown of each of the findings relevant to my research questions by exploring their recurrent subthemes. The four themes that were developed through this process were: guiding students to personal and academic growth, teaching as a form of care, encouraging engagement, and courses as living entities. In agreement with IPA process, the descriptions that follow are meant to define each participant as an individual before their compared, grouped, and analyzed accounts are presented as themes for the reader (Smith et al., 2009).

Participants

Each participant was teaching a course for a Women's Studies, Women's and Gender Studies, or Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies program or department at one of the four largest universities in the state of Indiana at the time their interview took place. In relation to their WGS teaching, the participants' titles included: lecturer, teaching assistant, affiliate member, director, associate instructor, associate professor, graduate instructor, and associate faculty. The sample included eight cis-gender females and three cis-gender males. Of these 11 professionals, eight identified as White, two identified as Black and African American or having African descent, and one did not claim a racial identity. Because the WGS programs and departments were relatively small in terms of their faculty, limited information has been provided regarding the individuals' place of employment, full-time role, or physical description to maintain participant confidentiality.

Andy

Across from my interview notes sat Andy and a three-ring binder of course materials that made her petite frame seem just a bit smaller. Andy and I met in a reserved university library meeting room on the second floor, where students taking summer classes could be seen passing by. As we settled ourselves at the long conference table, Andy mentioned spending a portion of the night before preparing for our conversation, something I had not anticipated. In the two hours we spent in conversation, I learned that organization and purposeful use of time and effort were cornerstones of Andy's approach to teaching. Six years of online teaching only in the field and evidence-based research has led Andy to utilize reciprocal feedback in her efforts to guide students to mastery. Not aiming to "convert" anyone to a feminist identity, Andy happily described accommodating her conservative students' wishes to gain empathy and understanding through their WGS education.

Eli

I met Eli in a small, reserved university meeting room just across the hall from his graduate student office. The room had a certain quirk to it with its mismatching walls and space-consuming, square table. Having spent the past four years teaching face-to-face courses only, many that focused on LGBT topics, Eli's most recent experience teaching an abbreviated Introduction to WGS course required some adjusting to his usual approach. When asked to describe his teaching philosophy, his self-described use of "buzz words" seemed primed and ready because of the preparation he has begun as he looks to enter the job market. Drawing from his previous experience as a university staff member, Eli dedicates time each semester to meet with his students individually to discuss the course, its assignments, and how its lessons may fit in their future careers. Understanding his students' struggles with the environment surrounding

their university, Eli has not been surprised when his queer students transfer to smaller, more liberal institutions.

Rosie

Rosie graciously welcomed me into her university office, the home of playful decorations and a partially packed moving box or two. Not unlike her present work area, Rosie's teaching has inhabited two different spaces for quite some time. Teaching lower-level online and upper-level face-to-face classes for the past 10 years, Rosie was excitedly anticipating returning to the physical Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies classroom. The epitome of comfort, Rosie did not seem to take herself too seriously nor too cavalier to admit she has had some difficulties in her role that she was still working on ironing out. Playfully calling for a Hillary Clinton article she had long packed up, her zeal was entertaining. Rosie's granted access to the university's interactive learning spaces accommodate her regular use of film, group discussions, and Twitter to more accessible for all. Citing local politics, visiting preachers, and disappearing health resources, Rosie believed there to be a "trickledown" effect from state culture to her university campus.

Aileen

Aileen and I met in a reserved public library meeting room. Though the room was long, skinny, and had only one door and no windows, Aileen made the space feel inviting. She was quick to ask questions to get to know me and my background better. Such invitation and care, I learned, were central to Aileen's teaching practice. Commanding in essence but not stature, Aileen gave off the air of a respected maternal figure who would not hesitate to take a moment to dissect the fairness of her actions and then surprise you with a witty retort in the next. Having taught in the field for 22 years, Aileen balked at her own confession that teaching had become a

practice of love. Both in the physical, face-to-face, and online classrooms, student wellbeing was highly prioritized alongside student learning. This is an especially impressive feat as Aileen has earned a reputation for being one of the most challenging professors in her department. Having completed her graduate studies in Indiana and returned later in her career, Aileen shared that she felt her work was needed here.

Jimmy

Incredibly hospitable, Jimmy enthusiastically offered to travel to meet with me. We met in a reserved student center meeting room at a fairly regal conference table that Jimmy was not too shy to point out. Seemingly located at the conceptual intersection of “no nonsense” and “learning should be fun,” Jimmy’s big personality was matched only by the certainty with which he spoke. Having taught for three years in face-to-face classrooms only, some of Jimmy’s major concerns for his teaching passionately centered around accessibility and his students’ safety. A bold being, Jimmy spoke frankly about his challenge learning to teach without total control. Coming to Indiana for his graduate studies, Jimmy’s previous conservative home admittedly helped mentally prepare him for his current teaching position.

Anna

Amongst bookshelves of three-ring binders, feminist novels, and pedagogy texts, Anna and I met her in her new university office. Holiday cards featuring Anna and her grinning children tacked onto a corkboard on her wall offered a sense of playfulness to the room. A former anti-feminist, Anna sought out a career teaching in the field that radically changed the course of her life as an undergraduate. Unapologetically cooling herself over the fixed air-conditioning unit behind her desk, Anna spoke assuredly and abruptly ended her responses with the equivalent of “I think that’s enough.” Having taught WGS classes in person and online for

the past 10 years, Anna was still experimenting with creating safe spaces for students with disabilities as well as trans and gender non-conforming identities. Fairly new to Indiana, Anna strayed from commenting on the state culture and its impact on her teaching experience.

Paul

Paul and I met in his most recently acquired university office. Offered a less than subtle, comfortable, high-backed purple chair, Paul and I spoke amidst the stacks of books that graced the spaces around our feet and bags as well as the bookshelves that lined the walls of his office. After 14 years of teaching in the field, Paul still felt a sense of privilege to do the work he was once told would not be an option for him. Having never taught online, Paul was skeptical of its use and as well as newer teaching pedagogies. Owning perhaps one of the largest vocabularies I have experienced in academia thus far, I was sweetly surprised as Paul spoke protectively of the undergraduate students he and his graduate students taught, oftentimes defending their lack of knowledge. Aware of the particularly liberal area in which he lives and works, Paul felt there to be an anti-intellectual culture throughout the state of Indiana that caused some of his students to struggle with shame and guilt throughout their undergraduate careers.

Joan

Direct and to the point, like the woman herself, Joan and I met in a private university office. Not one for tangents or flowery language, Joan's responses were powerfully concise, conveying the impression that she had said all that she wished to say about the matter. Having taught in WGS online and face-to-face for eight years, Joan had developed a low-tech, well-versed teaching approach. Utilizing a friend's textbook for the past several years, Joan leaned on the linear progression of time and history to move her class lessons forward. Knowing the text in and out, Joan has been able to fill the gaps in the literature with her own passion areas and films.

A testament to just how low-tech Joan's classes are, students are not permitted use laptops during the class session. Ending with strong remarks about the need for feminist knowledge transference in high school and junior high schools, Joan appeared optimistic about the potential change could bring.

Nzingha

Nzingha and I met in her private residence. We sat at a dining room table where one of her art projects still in progress could be seen lying on her living room floor. Creative and expressive, Nzingha was not shy about prioritizing her own needs for success as well as her students'. A graduate student with two years of face-to-face WGS teaching under her belt, Nzingha stressed the importance of learning by doing and using art in the process. Describing her approach to teaching as similar to Ms. Frizzle from *The Magic School Bus*, Nzingha first matched her course objectives with activities before turning to the literature for her courses. Nzingha also shared that the experiences she has had in Indiana as a woman of color have made teaching a primarily White classroom difficult at times.

Cordelia

Due to a technology issue with my audio recorder, Cordelia and I met twice at a diner over breakfast by her request. A bubbly and sharing soul, Cordelia responded passionately to each prompt, leaving one to think that given enough time she might just happily share the world with you. After five years in the WGS field, Cordelia was still experimenting with assignments and syllabus construction. Having allowed her students to design their own syllabus and assignments in the past, Cordelia's focus was primarily on the students getting the most out of their time in her WGS classes and feeling like she was their partner in crime and/or learning. Centering care as a major necessity in the teaching and learning process in Indiana, Cordelia had

also earned a reputation as being a safe space for queer students on campus. Feeling the weight of the world and her students, Cordelia longed for a community of her own, exaggeratingly pleading for a WGS retreat with no work in sight but enough self-care to go around.

Tulip

Tulip and I met in her cinderblock university office in two chairs just to the side of her standard issue metal desk. Pictures of Tulip and her family and a warm-smelling scent diffuser added life to the otherwise commonly drab office space known to exist in older university buildings. Having taught WGS for the past three years, Tulip's replies often circled back to her students' lack of exposure to the social justice topics and diverse social surroundings. Though she did not blame conservatism, Tulip did note that young persons in Indiana seemed to be kept away from information about gender, sexual, and racial identities, requiring a great deal of foundation building in her classroom. An accommodating soul, Tulip described her various attempts to accommodate her students in varying assessment methods and surveying students for their input and preferences for learning.

Themes

The four themes developed through this research process were: guiding students to personal and academic growth, teaching as a form of care, encouraging engagement, and courses as living entities. These findings represent the conscious choices made by the participants in their teaching that were admittedly partially influenced by their own positive and negative experiences as college students. What follows is a description of the data, examples for the reader to experience, and my own interpretation of their meanings. The findings and recurrent subthemes are illustrated in Figure 1 and are supported below through the provision of excerpts

from the participants' interview transcriptions. I also offer a sample of the emergent themes that served as keystones for the recurrent subthemes for further transparency.

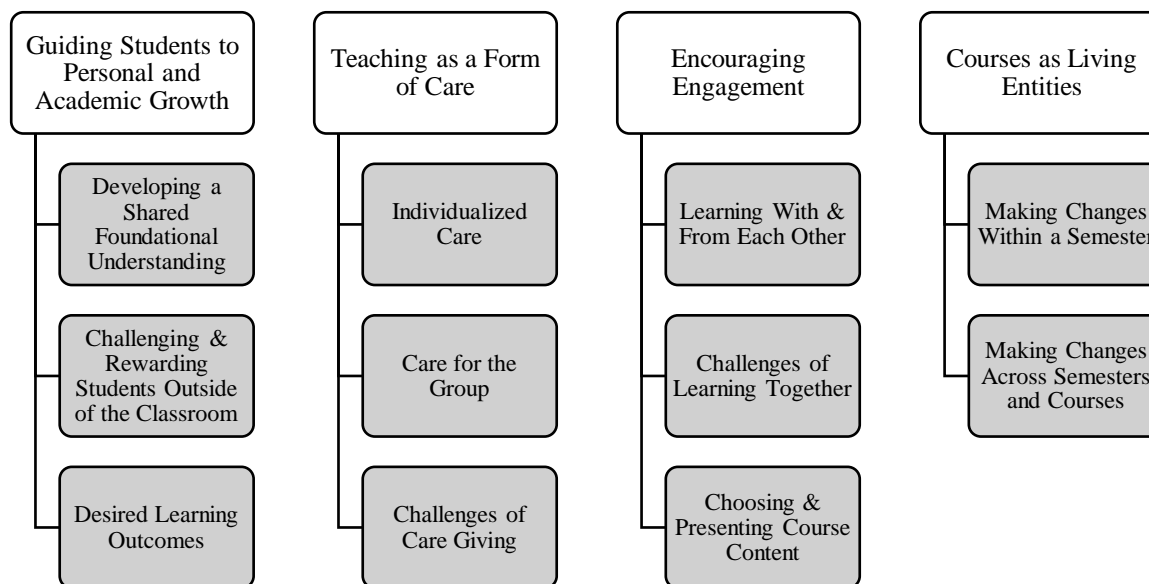


Figure 1. Themes and recurrent subthemes generated from data analysis.

Guiding Students to Personal and Academic Growth

While reflecting on their many experiences and efforts, the instructors described their work in terms of guiding their students toward the educationally common goal of academic improvement. Equally stressed, however, was the desire to help students grow personally throughout the duration of the course. These parts of the conversations seemed to me to be redefining or reframing what the responsibility of the instructor was, how the teaching and learning process appeared, and what the purpose of education was. The recurrent subthemes that comprise this theme include: developing a shared and foundational understanding, challenging and rewarding students outside of the classroom, and desired learning outcomes. Architects of their course design, assignments, and assessment methods, the participants described calculated efforts to bolster student learning. Certain areas and issues within feminist scholarship were

identified by the instructors as being necessary first hurdles to overcome in order for students to engage with each other as well as the course content that would follow. The instructors described using common course resources to challenge their students and encourage forward motion. Table 1 depicts a sample of the emergent themes within each of these subthemes. This guidance to growth was a focus in both the preparation stage as well as the participants' actual facilitation throughout the course.

Table 1

Guiding Students to Personal and Academic Growth Themes

Subthemes	Emergent Themes
Developing a Shared and Foundational Understanding	Vocabulary and terms History of women's & social justice movements First-time exposure Providing tools & resources
Challenging and Rewarding Students Outside of the Classroom	Assigning readings Written communication Obligating reading Quizzes and exams
Desired Learning Outcomes	Understanding of concepts Growth Readiness

Developing a shared, foundational understanding. At least two WGS courses were included in the core curriculum by all four of the universities at the time of this study. In my own experience, the inclusion of these WGS classes (commonly introduction-level) as social sciences options to satisfy university general education requirements diversifies the kinds of students that enroll in WGS courses. While students are self-selecting to engage with these topics, the instructors noted they often lacked awareness of basic feminist academic principles.

Describing her students as “fresh,” or new to WGS and its topics, Tulip looked to the influence of the state to make sense of her student’s knowledge scarcity,

So, in Indiana as you mentioned, it's a conservative state. And what I realized is that there's very little information that the students already have about Women's Studies or in- in the case of our program it's called Women and Gender Sexuality Studies. So, there is very little knowledge about, you know, diversity so because- in terms of the learning outcomes of the course, it does include not just issues about gender but includes issues about race, ethnicity, and things like that. So, I, you know, overall- for the most part, most of the students have very little knowledge about, you know, other races or you know, the fact that there may be more than one or two gender in terms of gender or things like that or your religion. So, they may have heard it, but really lack that the background- expansive background. Again, this is not a 100% of students, but this is like, you know, more students lack that depending on their background. So, I think I like to- what comes to mind is knowing that I have to lay the groundwork and do a lot of introduction-a basic introduction to . . . gender and race and-and class and just different status that they may not be aware of.

Teaching LGBT-focused classes through his WGS program or department, Eli noticed that even though his students’ identities aligned with the course content, many still exhibited knowledge gaps,

In terms of the actual content for LGBT Studies, there's sort of a big chunk of history, giving folks some context that queer people existed in the past. And there's some really interesting questions about how do we identify queer people in the past and how do we talk about them. But they need that sort of foundational block that queer people do exist

in the past. So many of them, even if they are queer identified, don't have that knowledge so there's no way to have a sense of context now without that piece.

Having also noticed that her students were not being exposed to feminism until college, Joan illustrated her frustration with the state education system and how she perceived it as limiting the capacity of introduction courses,

People should not have to wait to get to college to learn that there are issues going on.

People should not have to wait until they're in college to realize that sexual assault is not okay. You know, and that for somebody to walk up and to smack somebody else's butt that that's not okay and that they shouldn't have to wait that long. If anything in a conservative state like Indiana, that is the thing that I would push for in a minute. . . .

The thing about it is that on a university level, on an academic level, our intro class could mean- if we had students who had already been exposed in high school- middle school and high school, already been exposed I mean, imagine the possibilities of what we could do with an Intro class you- on this level, you know. We could get into more bell hooks, and we could get into more in- just everybody, you know.

The instructors cited this common lack of awareness as the reason behind spending class sessions on suffrage, the history of the women's and social justice movements, and basic but important vocabulary. The linear progression of time provided was useful for the participants' sequencing of the issues addressed in the course. Although Andy felt alone in doing so, many of her fellow professionals described these fundamental lessons as being integral for understanding the following course content,

The intro- I probably spend more time on the intro in my intro course than other instructors do, but what is gender studies? Asking questions about how- what do you

think about feminism in the media, kind of priming them to get the basics. We talk a lot about the differences between gender and sex. We talk about the history of feminism, and they read about it. So, I think there's still a lot left that needs to set the stage and the foundation before you can just jump in.

The instructors explained that laying this groundwork was especially important because students entered their classrooms at different points in their undergraduate careers from varying disciplines. It was explained that this focus provided students with a common starting point and a shared knowledge of basic skills and terms necessary for communicating with one another throughout the course. Many of the instructors were also cognizant that their class may be the only WGS class their students would take in their undergraduate career. With this in mind, instructors like Anna focused on providing resources to their students, "I just want to give them a germ of what Gender Studies is about and some tools they can use in their everyday lives in the hopes that they'll keep going."

As a former Indiana undergraduate and current WGS instructor, I understood this very basic need as being related to the culture and surroundings within which the students and institution were located. These influences tend to control, to varying degrees, the amount of information with which one becomes aware of and engages. Especially in a conservative environment, this effect can feel like a low-hanging fog that limits visibility of issues and events occurring outside of one's immediate location. A foundational understanding is required then to ensure that all students are able to "see" the same things.

Challenging and rewarding students outside of the classroom. Course readings, writing assignments, and assessments were utilized by the instructors outside of the classroom to expose students to the course content, encourage them to think critically, engage students in

introspection and reflection, and challenge their ability to process and utilize the course concepts. This out-of-class work was required for the students to pass the course and served as a motivator for students to complete the assigned readings. Aileen discussed how challenge and compensation were central tenants of her teaching approach,

I want to create a safe, thriving, learning environment where I challenge every student to do a lot of reading, writing, and thinking. In all my years of teaching, I've very rarely had a student say my classes are easy. I aspire to really challenge them, to make them work hard, and then give them every opportunity to refine that work, to make it better, to help them achieve their own objectives for the course, and to reward them amply.

Having been discouraged from assigning highly academically challenging materials in his teaching, Jimmy resolutely stood by the practice while expressing a preparedness to adjust as necessary,

I have no qualms about assigning scholarly articles to undergrads, and it's my job to help them work through it. So, I don't have an issue with assigning something that other people think is too difficult. That annoys me as an instructor because I have been told this before that I cannot expect so much from my students and I call bullshit, frankly. Because they will rise to the challenge and if they can't or don't then I know that's on me to change course to reflect what they are capable of. But I never go in thinking that any of my students are incapable of accomplishing what readings I have given and what assignments I'm asking for.

Seeing each type of assignment as having a specific purpose, Andy recounted her process of deciding what kind of writing to assign to her students,

I think there's some very specific content and questions that are better serviced in a discussion board concept and then there's some questions that are better served in a concept paper where they break down key concepts and they have to discuss this concept as it related to the material and what does that mean? What does intersectionality mean according to this author? How does that compare to how bell hooks talked about intersectionality in the very first assignment? So that's one concept paper. They don't need to discuss that in the discussion board. That's their work. That's their growth; that's a way they have demonstrated mastery. So, mastery of those concepts can take place in a variety of ways you can assess that- but I think there are different ways to assess it whether that is in a discussion board.

Similarly, other assignment characteristics were points for consideration when attempting challenge their students' skills. Wanting to keep his students on the tips of their toes, Eli saw an opportunity to stress the importance of assessment and knowing how to perform accordingly,

Every assignment has a different rubric until the last assignment, and we vote to create a rubric or whatever they say, they think is by consensus- we put this together. The idea is that we- I mean, it's not that I don't take the grading and the assessment seriously, it's that I think that there's- I want the students to think critically about how they are being assessed. It's important to me that I'm changing it up, so they're constantly sort of having to figure out "what am I actually supposed to do for this?" By having all these different rubrics, some of which are less clear than others and more esoteric than others, the idea is that they're really thinking critically about "what does it mean to complete the assignment?"

Hoping to help her students connect to the course material and then expand their understanding, Anna explained how she has used writing assignments to guide student thought from the personal understanding to a more global awareness,

I want them to have the ability to pay attention to how gender, race, sexuality, lots of dimensions of social identity as they sometimes like think of it as- I think of them as political categories but to recognize those things, to think about how, you know, that constructs the way they interact with the world and the world interacts with them but to not settle on thinking about it in the zone of their personal experience only. So, it's really important that they learn how to think about that and make connections from their personal experience to their community experience to the like a macro level, national experience, to the global . . . So, the scaffolding is super important for me. So, in these Intro level classes I'm always starting out with assignments that ask them to kind of mind their personal experience or- so, I'll ask them to think about an occasion when they talked about this or saw this or whatever, something that connects with them personally. Later on, I might have them do something that is focused on their campus community.

Many of the instructors described a tumultuous relationship with students coming to classes unprepared or not having read the assigned materials. They reported strategically obligating or incentivizing their students to complete the readings by using quizzes and exams to test the students' knowledge of the course materials. Paul explained how his use of open book exams has presented the opportunity for students to showcase their ability to synthesize information strategically while simultaneously making their procrastination to read a greater burden,

I tried to tell them like, “It's important you keep up with the reading that I assign because the exams are structured to obligate you to go back and do something with that reading. So, you can either try to keep up with it as best you can and then benefit from having read it and then use our discussions as a way to fully comprehend it so the come times comes time to do the midterm or the final, you'll have everything you need in order to sit down and do it. Or you can manage your schedule differently, which I think is less than optimal. Like, listen to what's going on in class, not necessarily feel fully prepared to participate, and then get slammed with having to catch up on all that reading over the 10 days to work on the midterm and the final. But, one way or another, you're going to have to read it in order to- or at least a sizeable portion of it- to respond to these questions. If you do that, you'll be fine” and 90% of the time, they are. “If you don't do it, it's going to be a real struggle. It's going to be 10 times harder, and that's the point. It's just like- it's to provide you with an incentive to keep up with it and, you know, and to give you an opportunity to manage your life differently if you need to, but ultimately to hold you accountable for like engaging with these materials.”

The use of open book assessments was fairly common amongst the participants, stressing the importance of encouraging students to engage with the course content regardless of the context or their motivations. Cordelia described her final exam as being “open note, open Google, but not open student.” This approach required her students to seek out and acquaint themselves with the information they were to have already learned by the completion of the course.

While many educators would love to believe their students are deeply committed and invested in every aspect of the educational careers, the reality of it can be somewhat disappointing. This use of assignments, tests, points, and grades was aimed to extrinsically

motivate students who may diverge from the ideal picture of the self-motivated learner.

Motivation such as this is necessary for assisting students in developing that shared, foundational understanding and expanding upon it throughout the rest of the course.

Desired learning outcomes. While students often see points or grades as rewards for their hard work, the participants saw these as means to an end. Covering many topics and issues all the while expecting their students to rise to the challenge, the instructors' ultimate goals for their undergraduates were fairly simple and straightforward: understanding, growth, and readiness. These goals were prioritized with the conscious knowledge that the instructors' time with their students was notably limited and may encapsulate the students' complete exposure to WGS. As she contemplated of her teaching philosophy, Tulip described a meaningful relation that exists between teaching WGS course content and the potential it creates for change in her students,

In terms of philosophy it's really impacting, you know, increasing the students' knowledge- hopefully something that changes their perception of certain concepts that I'm teaching. So, having enough information to give them hopefully that, you know, permeates they're, you know, learned behavior- learned philosophies and that permeates into moreover enlightenment, enlargement of their scope, and things like that . . . my goal is just that they learn and it increases their knowledge of the concepts that I teach.

Several of the instructors saw value in focusing on course content to prepare students for their future and possibly current social and interpersonal relations,

With undergraduates it is important for them, when they leave, to know what's the difference between genderqueer and transgender, cisgender. You just need to know that so when you're walking in the world- in the world people are identifying as such and you

want to be informed, right, that you know the language which people are using. I think that's important.

Expounding upon this idea of readying students, Joan drew attention to her focus on the casual day-to-day application of the course content,

They're not going to talk about feminist theory with just anybody that they meet, right? . . . but will they talk about the way that they were raised or . . . children's toys- the fact that, you know, Target has done an amazing thing by getting rid of, you know, the "boys' and girls' section" of toys. Or are they going to talk to their friends and their family about sexist jokes? And what is a sexist joke is and what a racist joke is and classist joke is and, you know, how- what it means that, you know, for an individual to be trans, you know? Whereas you have all these people who are "I just don't get it." Well okay, let's talk about it. Are they prepared for that, right? Do I want them to know the difference between sex and gender? Yes, because it still drives me crazy, but at the same time, I'm not so focused on do they know specific words . . . Do they know how to apply this stuff? Do they know how to talk to people, you know, when they're going through this, when they're around their friends, you know? Will they be able to call somebody out and say, "you know, that's not funny." That's kind of what I'm shooting for.

Highlighting the importance of the learning process, Jimmy described how his goal of student growth has influenced his course design,

It's about student growth, it's about a better connection to self. Of course, work sucks, nobody wants to write for class. Just one more thing you have to think about over the weekend but I- it really does seem when I'm reading the assignments . . . I can see that something is happening. Like it is apparent to me that they are thinking more than they

are just writing. The information that they're writing is not about fulfilling an assignment it's about communicating an idea and I think there's a really fundamental difference there. So, I try to design assignments in a way that is conducive to that.

Influenced by their perceptions of the state influences, student awareness, and future needs, deliberate efforts were put forth to enrich students' undergraduate careers. Agreeing that a shared, foundational knowledge was necessary to progress their students, the instructors sought out slightly different but related end points for their educational journey. Utilizing assignments, assessments, and readings, the participants crafted out-of-class challenges that motivated the students to engage with the course materials in order to earn a passing grade in the course.

Throughout our conversations, I began to see these learning outcomes as part of a mountain peak of sorts. They were the ultimate goal, the reason for all the challenging work on both sides of the equation. While not all students successfully master these goals, the hope is that they have moved up and are therefore closer to doing so. One can only accomplish these goals by first climbing above the fog and then continuing on, simultaneously increasing their visibility as they go. These goals require students to put forth effort, endure, and improve and/or change over time. This cannot be done for them.

Teaching as a Form of Care

In their roles as instructors of record, the participants recounted a number of intentional efforts that appeared fueled by their care for the students' wellbeing and educational success. The recurrent subthemes that make up this theme include: individualized care, care for the group, and challenges of care-giving. Table 2 depicts a sample of the emergent themes within each of these subthemes. Infused in their facilitation styles, evident in their interactions with the students, and ultimately wearing on them physically and emotionally, the instructors

accompanied their responsibility to teach with a call to care. These efforts stuck out to me most as they were not administratively required, did not result in monetary compensation, were physically and mentally taxing, and yet were consistently present throughout the majority of the participants' experiences and efforts facilitating learning opportunities.

Table 2

Teaching as a Form of Care Themes

Subthemes	Emergent Themes
Individualized Care	Emailing students Instructor feedback Making accommodations Meetings with students
Care for the Group	Conducive learning environment Creating a safe space Modeling Fostering community Respect Observing student needs
Challenges of Care Giving	Emotionally draining Time consuming Physically taxing

Individualized care. Sometimes beginning prior to the start of a semester but certainly present throughout, the instructors sought out meaningful and personalized communication with each of their students. Valuing the notion of invitation, Aileen explained how she has attempted to make her online students feel welcomed and seen in a less than personal learning atmosphere,

What I have tried to do is to incorporate my teaching philosophy into the online environment. I make it deeply personal. I can do that in Women's Studies and Communication because my classes are rarely more than 25-30 people and every student

in my class gets, you know, an email that says “Welcome Ashley! So happy to see that you're in the class. Excited to hear about the work you're doing at _____.”

Aileen also used emails to avoid saying, “Excuse me, Susan, can you stay?” when students needed to be confronted or appeared to have been upset by what took place in the class session. A number of instructors also designated a tendency to email students when they had stopped submitting work or attending classes. Expressing concern for their wellbeing, Joan discussed how she has attempted to support meaningful connections with her students that could very easily remain strangers,

I give them like this whole thing like, “This is me. This is who I am, and this is what I do and I'm a pet parent and, you know, I have a significant other, you know.” And so, even though I'm not there face-to-face to talk to them and to let them know, you know what I mean, I'm still letting them know “I've been in your shoes. I've been a student here. I know what's up. I know what you're going through, but this is who I am as a person” . . . So, I still try to make that same type of connection. And when students are not turning in assignments . . . I'm the one sending an email like “hey, where did you go?” You know? “Do you want to talk about it? You got a problem? Do you need resources?”

Having worked as a university staff member without a physical classroom for many years prior, Eli relied on familiar tactics to get to know the students with whom he was working. Taking one-on-one communication one step further, Eli revealed he has met with each of his students face-to-face at least once during their course,

Now I'm using student-centered instruction which just seems very buzz world laden phrase and trying to refine that, but I guess the idea is- I think there's a real power to meeting with students one-on-one and individualizing as much as possible. Because our

courses are relatively small, I think it's a lot easier to do that. I can have one-on-one meetings with every student by the end of the semester. Some of them more than that but really kind of getting to know them at an individual level and try to cultivate an investment in the course from them. So, you know, just not "I'm glad you're in this course" but "why are you in this course and what do you want to do with it?" Regardless of what that answer is, if you're an engineer or a WGS major, there's something you can get out of that, and I think helping students to identify that is the way that I've found to kind of get them invested in the course as a whole. That once I have that, a sort of buy-in, we can do a lot more in discussion and we can-I get better responses from them in terms of responding to readings or research projects.

Seemingly in support of their previously addressed, desired learning outcomes for their students, the instructors often referenced supporting student growth and understanding by providing them with feedback on their submitted assignments. This feedback was described to be beneficial to the students' future success, necessarily timely, and willingly provided. While some of the instructors took a less "ecofriendly" approach to grading by requiring physical copies or printing out the students' papers, technology and online grading platforms sped up the process for others. Andy explained a thorough approach to communicating with students via assessment,

So, guiding for me is most important when I'm offering prompt, comprehensive feedback. So, the goal is to give them a couple minutes audio/visual preferably or written to say "you've done x, y, and z really well. This is your strong point. You could do better at making transitions. You could do better with elaborating. I want you to master this by your next couple of assignments. I want to see an improvement." Balancing the "you did well" with "if I didn't tell you where you could improve, I think this would be a

waste of your time.” So, I guide them to mastery. I guide them to improvement. I guide them to better critiquing and analyzing the concepts.

Admittedly influenced by the relationship-centered work of Martin Buber, in the physical classroom Cordelia has requested different a new classroom after meeting specific students,

I usually don't ask to switch classrooms until I get to know these students, because like I said, sometimes I have this vision for how things are going to go and then I meet my students and I'm like “nope!” And sometimes that's why I change classrooms. I go “I liked this classroom right until I met you. And now, we got to go.” I had a student with- it was not in Women's Studies but the idea transfers- I had a student with severe PTSD. He suffered brain injury in time of war, and we are in a classroom that was abutted indoor-outdoor hallway and we have these heavy . . . indoor-outdoor doors that every time the door opened and closed you would hear “WHOMP.” And every single time he was like watching, clutching the ceiling, right?

Being able to provide a space where all the students could learn was also a priority for Jimmy who drew attention to many areas in which a classroom may be a deterrent,

It's a huge thing for me too just with matters of accessibility. Because accessibility is not just physical accommodations that buildings and rooms need to have for students with any sort of mobility type disability or anything else. Maybe they sprained their ankle in sport or anything. But it's about noises and sounds and scents and how many lights do I keep on in the room and, you know. If I show something in class- is there strobing lights type of setup. And how was the temperature? Drives me insane because my current institution, they lock all the thermostats, so I cannot change the individual temperature of the room without going through like three administrative levels and I want to scream. It's

like 75 when it's 96 degrees with a heat index of 102 in Indiana, and everybody is sweating like a whore in church . . . And that is an accessibility concern, to have the institution as a whole kind of regulate how and how not an instructor can modify the room to accommodate for any number of things . . . all of my syllabus policies are reflected or listed alphabetically. Obviously, academic integrity is the first one, but accessibility is the next. And I lay out very, very clearly if you need something whether or not you have the federal documentation in the Office of Disability Support, we need to have that conversation. This is your room too and if something is too loud or too hot or too cold or too bright or too dark. I mean those are things we can work with. So important to me.

Similarly, Anna was able to make individual accommodations for her students once she got to know them,

Based on their feedback, I ended up making different kinds of exceptions, so . . . they could do certain activities in lieu of class participation. Let's say they were really anxious about raising their hand, but we worked together on kind of individual plans. I make individual arrangements with most of my students, I guess.

The instructors used this individualized care to encourage their students to feel welcome, safe, and supported throughout the semester. Emails, meetings, thorough feedback, and individualized accommodations provided the opportunity for the instructors to get to know their students' needs and struggles and to identify areas in which corrective changes could be made. The instructors were self-motivated to seek out this one-one-one communication, often speaking affectionately and passionately about being able to support their students' wellbeing and success.

A common sentiment amongst WGS instructors, that was also expressed by a couple of the participants, is the notion of teaching being worthwhile if just one person in their classroom is positively affected by it. This attention to the individual, ironically, reminded me of a Biblical parable wherein a single lost lamb is found due to a shepherd's unwavering love for the sweet creature. This is not to say that the instructors have taken on the role of a messiah but perhaps more like that of the shepherd whose day-to-day role is self-supervised and focused on caring for the individual as well as the whole.

Care for the group. While caring for their students as individual parts of whole, the instructors also described caring for the collective. These efforts included procuring a conducive learning environment, creating a safe space, modeling, showing and insisting upon respect in the classroom, observing responses and needs, being mindful of student workloads, and fostering community throughout the semester. It was explained that modeling provided students with a physical example of how they could productively behave and speak in the classroom. Speaking assertively, Paul perceived the societal valuation of intellect to be a major concern and influence on his teaching approach,

There are obviously reams and reams and volumes and volumes and volumes of kind of writing about pedagogy and about kind of social justice investments in pedagogy and that sort of thing, but my teaching philosophy emerged, partly in response to my observation about what I see as being the biggest impediments that students face. And, one of the biggest impediments that they faces is that we live in a profoundly anti-intellectual society. We live in a society that is very suspicious of the political people taking a political initiative and having more . . . for lack of better term academic investments in their studies. We live in a society that encourages instrumentalism with regard to

learning, and thinking, and that sort of thing. And so, for me, a lot of good teaching is modeling a different way to be in the world. So, that they can see that it is possible to . . . not be ashamed about reading and caring. That they can see that it's possible to sort of have, you know, a really interesting and rewarding conversation about something that doesn't immediately lead to job preparation in its most parochial sense. So, that they can see that it's- you can change your mind about things based on interacting with other people. And so, that they can see that you can use thought and dialogue and, you know, sort of voracious intellectual appetite to do something more than hoard knowledge, but to actually like do things in the world and change the way you interact with people, and that sort of thing.

In classroom discussions, the instructors also modeled honesty and transparency regarding their struggles with certain current events and motivations in the classroom. Modeling was also used in some of the participants' online teaching wherein they would provide examples of how to communicate effectively and respectfully with one another in discussion boards.

Safety within in the classroom was referenced in relation to the students' relationship to the topics as well as the environment surrounding the university. As Cordelia pondered,

I wonder too if I weren't in Indiana would it say in my syllabus 300 times, "I'm a safe person. I'm a safe person, I'm a safe-" I mean I feel like I have to announce it again and again and again because so many of my students are not used to being around safe people, especially people who hold magic markers, right? If I were somewhere else would I need to announce so fervently in my syllabus "I'm here for you. This is a safe and engaging learning environment."

Creating a safe space for students was commonly described as intentionally avoiding student embarrassment while still challenging them to think deeply and boldly participate. Directing her attention to the nature of the course content, Nzingha emphasized the need for respect in the classroom and how it can help to create a safe learning space,

When you're dealing with Women's Studies, you're dealing with not only the topic of women's movements and the history and . . . the research that goes into gender and sexuality and race and class, but it's also about like your people. And I think it's a class where people are constantly having to check themselves and they're feeling really vulnerable and guilty and angry. And so, you have to come from a different place where you're like "let me just warn you, like you may be triggered in this class and this is how we can work through that. It's through respect."

Throughout the interviews, respect was presented as far more than a two-way street. While the instructors did contend that students should respect them and each other, they also spoke about respecting their students' personal learning goals. Some, but not all, of the participants acknowledged that they were not the only ones approaching the class with specific goals. Seemingly related the idea of "claiming an education," Rosie encouraged her students to use their voice to get the most out of their time together,

Even though I have learning goals and objectives and things for each individual class, I want the students to feel like they can make the most out of their own experience. And so, I want them to know that they have a voice in each class session and throughout the whole semester. And even if I don't agree with it, they should feel comfortable enough to share that information.

Aileen described the sometimes-painful aspect of respecting students' goals,

I try to make my experiences with my students deeply personal and that includes respecting what their own goals and objectives are. And so, I say to students “I struggle with this, but I will force myself to live up to the fact that if all you want is a C so that you can move on, I’m good with that and I’ll help you to do that. If what you want is an A, there’s no guarantee that any amount of work you do will get you an A because it really is not about quantity it’s about quality, but I’ll do everything I can do to get you to achieve that A.”

As addressed above, there is a great deal to cover in a single semester, and much of the content can be quite personal for the students. Observing student behaviors and body language allowed the participants to check the temperature of the room and adjust if the classroom was exhibiting distress characteristics. Cordelia described emotions in the classroom as having the potential to be “viral.” She clarified that a student could emotionally respond to sensitive topic like molestation that could spread throughout the classroom, creating a less than productive and potentially threatening learning environment for all present. Cordelia used her observations to make decisions about moving on to new topics,

I try to help my students stretch their comfort zones. I invite them into that space, but if I feel like I am getting to a place where they're like starting to get overwhelmed, I back off. Sometimes I don't touch that topic again that semester. Sometimes I don't go to the next topic because I'm like, “nope, . . . this group has reached their threshold with this.” And sometimes I just wait until the next time we meet, where I bring it up again later. So, it's . . . a dynamic process of watching my students and their feedback. That it's a big part of how I choose how to talk about, how to teach topics and actually what topics I teach.

Having experienced an unexpected lack of respect with harmful ramifications on the first day of class, Anna removed introductions from the beginning of her class schedule and has put effort into building community and getting to know each other instead,

I don't think anybody is really coming in thinking that they're going to be a part of community- a learning community so I don't want introductions to get lost. I also- and I'm rethinking this and I'm like I'm constantly struggling over this piece of it but- in the past, I've asked people if they want to, to share pronouns. I don't want to do that when people don't have any familiarity with each other. I have a lot of thoughts about pronouns like in the large lecture context . . . but yes, I'm like "forget the first day, forget the second day people are in and out of the classroom" because . . . I really want them to get to know each other and even be friends with each other. So sometimes I'll give extra credit for like "somebody host a movie night. Just go hang out, don't tell me if you're drinking. Don't tell me if you're doing anything you shouldn't be doing but take a picture together and whatever." . . . it doesn't have to be academic in the strictest sense . . . so one of the reasons I stopped doing introduction in the first week is just to like emphasize introductions more and get more buy-in from the people that are going to stay in that class.

Once again, the physical classroom was considered while the participants cared for their students. The size of the space, mobility of the desks, and technology access of the rooms were under scrutiny as the participants settled on a learning environment. Having adopted a teaching approach that calls for movement, Tulip recalled having to move rooms so that her students could interact and work with one another more easily,

I requested for different room from where I taught this time because I- there's something called active learning . . . but what it is is really better engagement with the students, having students participate and engage better with you when you are teaching. And that's something I really enjoy, and think is useful to get- carry the students along. But some classes are so tight in terms of how the seats are structured that I can't even- sometimes I can't . . . walk in between the rows. Sometimes we want to form groups we don't know what to do because the chairs are not- you're able to move them, so it just doesn't work. Sometimes we need to break things, so this university created kind of an active learning- some classrooms now have where you can use white boards . . . the tables are movable, and things like that. So . . . what I did was request from the- what's called building department here to please assign me a classroom where I can do that. Because I've taught several in a classroom where can't even walk in between the rows and it's not fun.

Modeling behavior, fostering community, establishing a safe space, acquiring an adaptive learning environment, observing their students, and respecting their goals were the instructors' ways of caring for the class as a whole. The participants used their influence and energy to set the class up for optimal success. Though mentioned above, community and active learning played an important role in many of the instructors' teaching approaches and are further explored in the following theme of "encouraging engagement."

I saw this care for their group as being an effort to create ideal-adjacent conditions in which learning could occur. While there will always be aspects of a semester, class, or classroom that are not preferable and are often out of one's control, the instructors displayed an awareness of what they could influence and potentially change for the betterment of their students' experience. This not only makes the "climbing" easier to do but it honors the effort put

forth by the participants. This work helps to ensure that the efforts the instructor puts forth in the classroom are not squandered because of external influences that could have been accounted for and possibly eradicated.

Challenges of care giving. Although the instructors chose to care for their students so thoroughly, they did experience some challenges in this chosen role. The care they provided had the potential to become emotionally draining, time consuming, and physically taxing over time. As a woman of color teaching at a primarily White institution in a primarily White state, Nzingha described the emotional demands of her position and location,

It's really difficult to be a person of color and living in Indiana. For- I would say obvious reasons but then that's counterproductive. I think that living in a state where there was a surge of the KKK and slavery was practiced but also, the mental anguishes of people of color who have lived here come equipped lived here is real. And so, I experience that on campus, outside of campus, and inside the classroom. And it's hard so, sometimes I come to class and, you know, I'd had an experience outside of class from some White male that I see that gives me a look or some female that gives me a look or says something to me and my friends, and then I come into class and now have to teach a majority of White students. It can be- it can honestly be infuriating because I want to be able to say like, I want to cry . . . but I also know that I have responsibility to teach people who want to learn who aren't- who don't come from a hateful place. And so, I think it's a very mental experience and emotional experience to teach Women's Studies, particularly here with the students I have.

While the instructors also valued providing students with thorough feedback, doing so proved to be time consuming. Larger class sizes, in particular, were described as producing demanding

grading workloads that required the time of the instructors. The participants also mentioned that reading the content of the students' work submitted was sometimes a bittersweet experience.

Andy expanded upon the challenging side of her teaching,

I think it is challenging to put so much of myself into critiquing their work and assessing their work and reading all of their papers and reading-,you know, they have a lot of "ah-ha moments" and all these lightbulbs go off and it's this- I don't get to see them face-to-face and of course that's a drawback to being online but they share so much detail. And when we talk about sexual harassment- so, I read about sexual- not just sexual harassment but reading every single semester, every single term we have this discussion board that says "how is sex about power" and they answer it and they say "I was harassed," "I was assaulted" and it's just a constant stream. So, I think that when you hold space for students and you're talking about such heavy, controversial topics every semester, year after year, I think that becomes a challenge for me.

One-on-one communications were also described as serving as a source of information on their students' wellbeing, personal struggles, and traumatic experiences. I imaged and have experienced this exchange as being similar to having one's ear to the bell jar written about by Sylvia Plath. While happy that her students have seen her as a safe person to reach out to, the faculty size of Cordelia's WGS program or department left her feeling tired and alone. Over time, she has also grown tired of being alone,

Sometimes I bring home my student- you can't not- at least I can't not when they share things with me in writing especially. They send me an email about how their bipolar has been acting up and they haven't been in class because they don't understand how to function outside of their bedroom; everything is too big and too scary. And I don't have

anyone to share that pain with and to say “hey, I handled it in this way. What do you think?” You know?

Physically being present in their classroom, listening, observing, and responding in kind was reasonably taxing on the instructors. Although he loves the work, Jimmy was not coy about the fatigue teaching causes him,

I mean teaching is an emotional and laborious act for me. I mean, I love getting up in front of students and working with them and watching them light up as they make connections but being social period is exhausting for me as an autistic person. It just is.

It drains every ounce of my energy to do what I do, despite loving it.

Dedicated to their crafts and the wellbeing of their students, the instructors were not immune to the demands that accompanied their work. Often times the very things the instructors valued such as providing feedback or being considered a safe space for students lead to emotional and physical side effects. Although it was not directly addressed, much of the work described by the participants such as requesting a new room, communicating with students, or finding alternative arrangements required the instructors to use their time and energy to provide for their students on top of the explicitly described demands of their teaching.

This theme, to me, shows the wear that occurs over the course of a semester when an instructor is committed and invested in the success of their students. It shows a willingness to put one’s self in susceptible and vulnerable position for the benefit of their students. This challenge and the acceptance of it shows the ongoing sacrifices of WGS instructors as they are work hard alongside their students.

Encouraging Engagement

As participants talked about their work in the classroom throughout their semesters of teaching, engagement was at the forefront of many of their decisions and actions. The recurrent subthemes that make up this theme include: learning with and from each other, challenge of learning together, and choosing and presenting course content. The instructors' utilization of discussion, group activities, relevant topics, and multimodal materials encouraged and sometimes required their students to become active participants in the class session. Table 3 depicts a sample of the emergent themes within each of these subthemes. As the participants spoke about their facilitation styles, materials, and planned lessons, I could hear the value they placed on having students not only physically present in their classrooms but also mentally engrossed. Engagement was stressed both in the instructors' planning as well as their facilitation of the learning opportunities.

Table 3

Encouraging Engagement Themes

Subthemes	Emergent Themes
Learning with and from Each Other	Students as resources Assuming the role of helper Discussion Active learning Accountability Updating instructor knowledge of popular culture
Challenges of Learning Together	Balancing discussions Class size Dynamic Dissent
Choosing and Presenting Course Content	Relevance Multimodal/Pairing Materials Text Selection

Learning with and from each other. Contrary to traditional classroom power dynamics in which the instructor is seen as the sole expert in the room, the participants described a more collaborative approach in their teaching. To encourage their students to engage with the course and its content, the instructors assumed the role of helper rather than teacher,

We were having class, and someone asked me something and I had this sort of epiphany moment where I was not allowing myself to be a partner in crime. I was setting myself up to be an expert and I allowed myself to say, “I don't know. Let's look that up.” I think that's also empowering for students. You don't have to hold everything in your head.

And my God, Google it. You know, look for it, allow discovery to happen.

In this role, the instructors often engaged their online and face-to-face classes in a shared discussion of the assigned readings and materials. Although they were perceived as lacking awareness of WGS topics or vocabulary, many of the instructors believed their students already had experience with certain elements of the concepts therein. Classroom discussions were described as being spaces for story-telling and understanding through listening and flowed from day to day and unit to unit. Although the instructors still felt the need to lecture occasionally, this approach intermittently required the instructors to model how to mobilize or apply the course content,

Just reading and regurgitating the content of the reading, that's not teaching to me.

That's just reading, and I think there's so much more to that. So, I try to exemplify that if it's quiet and we're not getting anywhere then I'll start with discussing “okay here's something about me that is, you know, related to this reading and how I make sense of it and how I use it and what it means to me that I use it.” And then people start thinking out loud and it gets really, really fascinating and fun in a lot of respects.

While the readings helped to educate the students on the various details of an issue, idea, or event, the discussions were viewed as serving many purposes. Placing high importance on articulation, Paul explained the function of participation in his classroom,

I feel very- kind of strongly about the importance of articulateness . . . there are lots of people who think lots of things who are super smart and whose experiences are really important to the way, we do and should view the world who never find their way into conversation because they're constantly stammering behind the kind of barrier of inarticulateness. They have something to say, but they can't figure out quite how to say it because they've not had the occasion to refine that set of skills. So, that's really important to me pedagogically, that they recognized that participation, for example, . . . it's important because learning how to speak and speak publicly and speak in a way that like draws people in, that engages them, that makes you feel fully realized in the world and kind of visible to people in the world is a skill you have to cultivate, often at great hazard to yourself.

Having taught exclusively online for some time, Andy described the important role that discussion boards have played in providing students with the opportunity to practice their communication skills and improve upon them,

I think because students start with . . . this foundational practice in the discussion boards they have these sort of easy questions, they get comfortable. They know they're not going to be yelled at or like- they feel more comfortable, more open in the discussions. So, the more we get to these heavier topics, the more they are going to disagree. Especially the conservative students, they are not always going to feel they can agree with the content or what is being said so a lot of them will say, especially at the end, "I

have a difficult time answering this question because I don't agree with abortion" or "I don't agree with trans people" whatever that means, you know. That's the way they word it, right? But they've learned how to talk in a discussion board forum . . . I think instructors are becoming-not becoming but are perhaps worried about or fearful about or, you know, what kind of discussions we are going to have in a conservative state, in a conservative community, and a lot of students coming here come from conservative families. So, I think the emphasis on this practicing and building up to talk about these heavier topics- and they practice articulating how they feel, they practice shaping how they are going to say it and they're worried about offending someone but towards the end their like "well it may offend someone but I'm going to frame it in such a way that it is in a scholarly manner." And that's appropriate and I think they learn that they can talk in a way that upholds their beliefs during a way that disagrees, and they can't be invisible.

Also used by other instructors in their online classes, some described struggling to facilitate as rich of a discussion as they had grown used to in their face-to-face classrooms. Regardless of this struggle, discussion was a principal component of the instructors' teaching approaches. Joan described discussion as being vital to getting to know her students and being able to work with them throughout the semester,

My classes are completely discussion based, always have been. And I prefer to keep it that way, I want to keep it that way. Especially if an intro to WGS, I- it should be discussion based. I feel like if you don't give students the opportunity to tell their stories, to share their experiences, to know where they're coming from, then I honestly don't think that you are truly understanding their world and how they're going to see WGS and how they're going to see the issues that you're going to present to them.

The instructors described participating in the course discussions as being a method of lessening the power divide between themselves and their students and relieved them of the responsibility to address or know everything. Although her class met face-to-face once a week, Rosie used discussion boards so that her students could address various interpretations of the same text as they read it,

I like discussion boards so much because they can read a chapter or they'll read the reading at the end of the chapter and they'll say "holy crap, like I didn't know that this was even an issue" or "I cannot believe that we still have to talk about," you know, so I guess I'm getting 20 different perspectives on one chapter like none of them are talking about the same issue. They each have their own different takeaways. And that's what I like about being in the class. Being in the class you- like in Capstone we're all reading, you know, Roxanne Gay's *Bad Feminist*. Each of the 38 people in that class had some different issue that they took away from that and that's what I love. Because what they're talking about I wouldn't- I'm like "oh, I totally forgot about that .I don't remember that being in there." So, that's what I really love is the differing like ideas, perspectives, what their own personal takeaways are.

Rosie also explained that using discussion boards invited all voices to be used without requiring students to speak in front of their peers or to try and squeeze in a comment during a lively class session. While this approach was perceived to take some responsibility away from the instructor, Nzingha noticed that discussion often resulted in a shared responsibility,

I let people say what they want and then we're able to deconstruct what people said and whatever. And sometimes it can be-it can get ugly. And one thing that was said- that I think I allowed it to be said that- it wasn't necessarily very inflammatory. It was this

person talking about privilege who did the privilege bank and he goes- some of the questions were “are you scared to walk alone at night? Do you think about these things? Were your ancestors involuntary brought here” and so we go through these lists of questions, and he goes, “well, you know, that wasn't that's privileged but it's not so bad. They could have asked questions like ‘were you scared you would die at night because of war’” or something. So, he was talking, and he was negating what other people in the room were feeling and so instead of me like saying, “you know what, I understand that, but this also is legitimized.” I didn't say anything, and I wish I had. And I think I didn't think because I didn't want to invalidate his experience. And so luckily, someone else in my class, which is what I love about my Women's Studies classes is that a lot of co-teaching happens and I'm just like “thank God for that,” right? Because then I have another student who would say what I wanted to say but I didn't.

Alongside class discussions, many of the participants also referenced using some form of active learning. This engaged approach utilized small group discussions, activities, and large class exercises. Tulip saw engagement and activities as helping to ensure that students were following her lead,

I try to interject opportunities for the students to respond, to give me their opinion. I try for them to read chapters before we get to this chapter, so I would say “read chapter four” before I teach chapter four, so I'll be asking questions about the- with the assumption or the presumption that you've read it. And I will give like extra points, bonus points for people who have done certain things. So, my approach is really one that tries to engage the students. Even in class I have a, you know, big something that I carry to class, there's like a poster, and I put it on the wall, and I ask each- I divide them into groups sometimes

I just walk around and ask questions. I ask for comments . . . about certain topics that we're talking about. I use a blog where students can post things. So, again, engagement, engagement, engagement is my approach . . . So, as I teach someone and maybe they will just hear you but make them do it and they will actually learn it. So that's really- I think it's a better learning experience when they are engaged.

In a similar fashion, Nzingha described her personal priorities for engagement and active learning, using them to partner with scholarly readings,

We have a book and we have objectives that are set forth by the department. So, I started looking at objectives and figuring out one- my first thing is like, "how can I create activity into these objectives?" Like that's just how I think because I'm like "How am I going to get them to actually participate in learning about this?" So, I set activities apart and then I go back and I find readings, which I think is a little backwards, but that's just the way I think. I think about how to get them engaged and then what other scholarly things that can shape that engagement. And so, we'll have like a discussion where we'll do readings and stuff like that in conversation with activities.

Learning together also entailed an element of responsibility or accountability. Paul viewed his students' dedication to their studies as being vital to their success,

I always say to them my- "the deal is you need to be in class. If you're not here, my assumption is you have made a calculation about the available resources and decided you need to be someplace else. It doesn't change the fact that you're not in class, but I don't want to know why. I mean, I want to know why in the sense I'm concerned about your health and welfare. I don't want doctor's notes. I don't want death certificates. I don't want emails explained to me that you had a job interview and it's really important . . . I

don't want emails telling me that, you know, this thing is going on in your family, and you'd really like to be able to deal with it." I'm like . . . "those are decisions, we all make all the time. And if something was going on in my family, and I needed to prioritize that over this class for a day. Do it. Like you should do it. I trust your ability to do that. But I also know that there is a difference at the end of the semester between somebody having had to make those tough choices two, three, maybe four times over the course of a semester and somebody missing August or October and November. Which may still be for a cause, right? But the bottom line is if you've missed half a class, it's very hard for me, and hopefully for you, to say that that is substantively the same as having been here regularly participating and discussing demonstrating that you're doing the reading and performing competently on the midterms.

Many also wanted their students to feel a responsibility to one another. Anna described wanting her students to understand that showing up and participating was a way they could improve each other's experience in the class,

One of my big goals, because of the bold participation emphasis, is getting people to feel a sense of responsibility not toward me but to themselves and toward each other. As a learning community, as just people sitting next to each other, as people who are like the same age, hanging out with each other not even in the classroom but just as a campus community too. So, one thing that I always do, I have participation and attendance requirements which not everybody does but I'm trying to engender some accountability not to me- and there's other things that I do because I don't want accountability to me.

By focusing on engagement, the instructors hope to enrich the students' educational experience. Discussion, activities, and small group discussions often required students to

participate and share with each other. During this exchange, the students were able to learn from the experiences of each other and the instructor. Many of the participants also described learning from their students in regard to popular culture where their awareness may have been lacking.

Occurring simultaneously with the assignments, texts, and quizzes described previously, I found the instructors' consistent focus on student engagement to serve many purposes. By stepping aside and learning together, the instructors were able to somewhat balance out the amount of time students work with the course material on their own with their own thoughts and feelings and then with others with differing perspectives and experiences. This approach allows the student to work through their own thoughts but also provides an opportunity to hear from others and take their thoughts into consideration as well. While physically taking up space in a room, a classroom can become a place for invisible students who are able to pass through a course without ever having their thoughts, perspectives, or experiences seen by others. This invisible student gives nothing to the room and cannot receive anything in return such as validation or affirmation regarding their own lived experience. This kind of student can become a classroom lurker when not obligated to engage. The physical engagement used in the classroom required students that would otherwise be stationary to mobilize and learn by doing with others. This approach does not relieve the instructor of their responsibilities but rather requires that they maintain an active presence where they too can learn and grow in their teaching.

Challenges of learning together. Although learning with and from each other was viewed as having many advantages, some difficulties utilizing this approach were also addressed by the participants. Classroom dynamic was found to be a less than predictable and

uncontrollable challenge for some of the instructors. Jimmy described his understanding of the importance and elusive nature of dynamic in his classroom,

I have some level of desire to maintain some level of structure but it's part of that kind of organic conversation approach that I like to think happens. I don't think that can be facilitated well if it's just a back and forth between students and me. It needs to be much more flowing than which is something I cannot create it's something that just happens if it happens and doesn't if it doesn't.

Some of the instructors cited class size as being an influential factor in predicating the dynamic of a section, perceiving smaller classes to be more personal. Large class sizes were described as being factors to overcome in the pursuit of getting to know their students. In fact, many felt they had been able to successfully learn together because of their smaller sized classes. The instructors referenced the needing more resources, break out classes, or instructional assistance in larger classes and feeling that community and conversation would be harder to do with too many more people in the room. Aileen's experience, however, spoke to the unpleasant and unpredictable nature of classroom dynamic,

Once I was teaching two sections back to back and it was just bizarre. The second class was great, the same material, the same everything. The first class- it was horrible. It was like teaching middle school students. They were rude, they were nasty, they were nasty to each other they were nasty to me. I would say things that in other classes would get wonderful discussions going and in this class would get bizarre challenges. This was a long time ago, so I don't remember what they were I just remember that I hated being in that class. Then they would literally walk out, the new class would walk in; same material and it would go great. It got to the point three-fourths through the semester, I

had to- I don't remember what it was at all but I said something to them, got all these responses to it, and then I said "in no way did any of you want to respond by saying 'blah blah blah' and they looked at me like 'why would anybody do that?'" and I said "because that's what the class before you did." And I said, "and I'm not naming any names" I said that "it's just been a really weird semester where everything I do in both classes seems to be the same and nothing that I do feels right in this other class."

Though no instructors expressed the immediate desire to leave Indiana, their experiences describe a potentially challenging environment to work in and with. Citing national news stories, some of the instructors admitted feeling uneasy about the potential backlash they might experience teaching WGS in a conservative area. Strongly differing points of view also presented challenges in the participants' classrooms. Paul felt particularly exhausted by the divisiveness of the groups,

It's the right wingers- to go to the original impulsive the thing of the study I can deal with right wing stuff like I can deal with cultural conservatism. It's actually the people on the self-styled left who I find harder to deal with because the thoughtful ones are really thoughtful, the dogmatism of the left the sort of identity politics of left I- it can be very exhausting. It's actually what absorbs most of the energy in this context in terms of navigating. It's my experience anyway. It's always been the curse of the left, right? The ability to sort of immolate on its own internal divisions and everything.

Similarly, Rosie experienced first-hand the difficulty of learning with and from individuals who were not invested in learning from each other,

One of my first semesters . . . we were in 220, I think, and sitting in a circle having discussions blah blah blah but I had to students in that class that first of all were on

complete opposite ends politically and had no qualms about like sharing that with people but also just personally I feel like I'm on different political spectrums with people but I can still work with them and, you know, . . . But these two were very much like “this is who I am, this is how it has to be” and so it just it made class discussions so difficult because other people would be talking and whatever the topic would be and the woman would show up in full-blown biker gear and she was just like “I had to high school age sons and I don't let people talk shit blah blah blah” like hilarious but also did not know when her time to talk was . . . by the time I realized that it was going to be an issue, we had steam rolled through like half the semester and I was just like “ahhh!” Because the guy on the other end was bringing a Bible to class. So, he would be like “well in Deuteronomy it says blah blah blah blah blah.” And I'm like “this has nothing to do with what we're talking about.”

In classes that directly address identities like LGBT-focused courses, division can be difficult to avoid. Eli, a self-disclosed gay man, explained trying to maintain an “us” in his classroom,

“I have to find ways to make sure that our discussion is balanced and that it doesn't become a very clear “us versus them” or that certain people are positioned as experts. But there's like this- again, how do you get them to talking to each other but also have everyone understand that yeah this is a unique space in terms of kind of being able to be open with your identity that you can't, you know, in a math lecture.

Face-to-face discussion was not unique in its challenges, Andy pointed out an issue with online discussion boards as well,

Let's say everything is happening on a discussion board. People post once a week and they respond to each other's post by the next day, that kind of thing. It's really hard to

make important interventions when a conversation goes in a direction that is problematic or that needs to be massaged in a particular way. Like sometimes something problematic will sit there for a day causing harm, you know what I'm saying?

Although the instructors have seen wonderful results from learning with and from their students, certain challenges were hard to avoid.

As the instructors attempted to influence conditions in the theme "teaching as a form of care," this aspect of their teaching displayed a limit of their control with which many were still attempting to work. These challenges can be especially frustrating when sharing responsibility and power in the classroom results in a slower pace, unproductive conversation, and accidental harm caused by divisive political views and a lack of respect for one another. Still, many of the instructors felt that the benefits of learning together outweighed the challenges of finding a way to join differing voices and opinions in learning.

Choosing and presenting course content. Another element of encouraging student engagement involved the selection of course materials and how they would be presented. Most commonly, the instructors prioritized current events and local politics alongside any content they felt was highly relevant to the students' lives. Rosie described how disappearing resources in the state have led to certain topics being stressed more heavily in her classes,

We probably would have talked about these issues no matter what, but I think it's just sort of heightened because of the political landscape and one of those things is the ongoing issue with Planned Parenthood and the fact that we don't have one. The fact of the Fort Wayne one just closed some people were talking about that in my summer class. And- and so the lack of resources when it comes to reproductive justice in this state is an issue and a cause for concern for many, many students. I think it- like it boils down to for

many people Intro or otherwise like birth control issues or- or how to take care of children that that they want to have or, you know, relationships and parenting and things like that I think those are issues that have been covered every semester it's just sometimes they get heightened based on what's going on in the state.

Taking stock of his location, Eli had taken time to clarify information for his students that was otherwise difficult to find or comprehend,

I think teaching in Indiana especially in LGBT Studies means clarifying the political situation for queer people in this state and sort of reminding students who are out of state students or, you know, they're just not aware coming out of high school here that, you know, you can still be fired for being gay in most parts of Indiana. It's not a progressive place. There's this federal opening with same-sex marriage but there's all these other issues. And I guess, in teaching Women's Studies to talk about some of the situations regarding abortion laws here- that there are these political imperatives that are important because they directly connect with what we are trying to reach in the class but also because this is a story that gets sort of whitewashed and delegitimized in the media or around here in Indiana. It's actually hard to find out what the laws are sometimes. I think- taking that opportunity to really call attention to the situation without fermenting the activism or something like that. Context matters and a lot of our students especially in LGBT Studies, they may not succeed here at _____ because it is more of a conservative school and we have a lot of students each year that decide to go to a small like Earlham in Richmond or try to find these- or transfer to _____ that sort of thing. "I want to go somewhere where I can be more out, more queer." So that definitely

impacts the teaching because those are the students who are going to be faced with that sort of problem.

Similarly, Cordelia described feeling the need to combat and/or complete the amount of misinformation and partial information that was available to her students, “I think it’s actually feeding the polarization in our state because there’s so much misunderstanding.”

While information regarding Indiana was clearly relevant to their students, other materials needed to be assessed for their relevance by the instructors. Andy explained that she has contemplated the age of her materials as she decides what will make it into her course,

I make sure my content is relevant, that it’s addressing some of these bigger questions that, you know. If it’s dated is it still relevant? So, going back and going through and making sure- I’ve started to actually ask my students “this article was published in 2011” and they’re honestly shocked because at the end it says 2011 and I said- I asked them “is this still relevant.” Almost everyone says “yeah, this hasn’t changed.” So, it allows them to see- I had one student say “_____’s content is dated” so I started to ask that question and now they can see that this is old content but its relevant and that’s really sad. You know, that such a long time later and it’s still relevant or an article unpacking privilege by Macintosh, I used to assign that and then I updated that and now they read one by a Genie Crossly on privilege so that they see the difference that time has made when we have these discussions. So, I like to have these- this older piece but then add this other piece and ask them to kind of compare and contrast or see if it’s dated.

Jimmy, however, focused on difficulty and diversity of the texts as he made choices for his course,

If a reading is challenging for me like I'm not giving Judith Butler to undergrads. I'm just not going to do it because I have trouble with Butler so I know an 18-year-old is- but things like Feminist Disability theory, I incorporate into my Intro class and I assign the entirety of "Mapping the Margins" in my Intro class. Which when I was an undergrad I didn't get until my junior year in full and I'm like "no y'all going to read this. This is a foundational piece of work from Black feminist, legal theory. You are going to read this. We are going to spend a day discussing this and only this." I think there is a fear of that almost with people. That they don't want to assign things that will make them look bad on course evaluations. "Oh, this professor is too hard." To me that means I've done my job. Because if I was really too hard, you would have come to me and asked for help or you would have changed course or voted on a different set of readings. I believe in a challenge. It's kind of a double-edged sword.

Rosie found selecting a text to be rather easy seeing as how she wrote the actual book and purposely left some gaps. These gaps meant that instructors could tailor the class to their own teaching styles while still using a single central text,

For the Intro I since I wrote the textbook, I when I wrote it, I had in mind that I thought that there were 10 topics that really needed to be covered in an Intro class or Rosie's Intro class because I don't really have any other frame, you know, I've met other people that teach Intros but it's not like I am an expert in what they're trying to cover. But from my experience I felt like there were 10 topics that really needed to be covered and so that's what I wrote about but knowing that it was a 16-week class I wanted there to be some build-ins so that faculty could choose other assignments and other readings or films or what have you that they could work in, so it makes it more, you know, their own

experience. Because I don't want to tell students what they should be learning. I don't want to tell faculty "this is what you should do, read this." . . . I think that really works because some of the stuff that I like to cover are things that are really important to me like wage gap issues and intersectionality issues and feminist parenting and relationships and families and I think don't get talked about in other areas and then there's always the underlying history theme.

The price and accessibility of the texts were also taken into consideration during this process. Financial burden was seen by some of the participants as being an accessibility issue in that some students may struggle to access and therefore engage with the course materials. Many noted that while they were happy with the textbook they had chosen, much like Cordelia, they had updated to the newest edition,

I'm so comfortable with the material I really like my textbook. I haven't changed the textbook, I've changed editions the new editions come out and I preview the readings from that edition.

Most commonly, instructors expressed feeling the use of a single text left gaps that needed to be filled by at least a second source.

Utilizing the various mediums, these sources were paired together, sometimes creating new connections for their students to explore or discuss. The instructors explained the additional resources were useful in assisting student understanding, expanding on an issue, providing a second point of view, or connecting to another issue. In this sense, no one singular information source was seen as sufficient. YouTube playlists allowed for students to watch videos on their own time and access them even after the course ended while Twitter facilitated an accessible and casual way to share ideas and responses to course materials. Streaming songs in the classroom

also allowed the students to experience an artifact together and respond to it in kind. Tulip saw videos as a way to help expose her students to issues they may be less motivated to read about,

So yes, the textbook is the first thing I do. Then I start writing up the syllabus and that's where I think of supplementary materials. I think of articles and these days we're looking to have films and videos, so the-the university here does have, you know, a film studio, which is like well like educational material, you know, that helps document- documentaries essentially is what they are. So, the libraries here give only students from this university access to that. So, there are times in or certain topics I'm able to say, "watch this" and many of them have come back to say- because young people don't read as much as we did back in the day. So, they do like visual resources, so I do have that and . . . I choose the textbook, I thought to prepare the syllabus for the course and that's my preparatory method. I find videos that are contemporary and speak to- because those tend to connect with, you know, students quite a bit. So, I supplement the reading material with these visuals for them.

Having not always been able to choose her own text, Joan very intentionally made decisions about what she would and would not include in her teaching, making sure that the materials were accessible to all of her students,

When I very first got this gig, I was hired on a Friday and classes started on Monday. And I was given the absolute worst textbook ever because that's what the person who was going to do so class was going to use. And I mean that book was- it was dreadful. And so, I really didn't have a lot of preparation, you know, and so then as time went on, I was able to choose my own textbook. I was able to choose the films that I wanted to do and now that I also have moved into not just being in the classroom, but also online, my

online students actually watch more film and more video than what my face-to-face class students do. And so, I do put a lot more time into that . . . I actually choose films from Netflix because the majority of students they have it in if they don't have it, you can get a 30-day subscription for free, so you don't have to pay for it. If, you know, get the list of movies, get a free subscription, watch the four movies, and be done with it, you know, get rid of the subscription . . . I actually spend time watching film on documentaries and things like that on Netflix I mean that's something that's probably the length of my "preparation."

Above all, relevance was prized as the instructors felt this information would be most useful for their students. Current events played an important role in determining an artifact's relevance; as described by Tulip, "There are times where we literally watch history unfold before our eyes." Texts were chosen carefully and often pair with other materials to increase their coverage or depth. These multimodal course materials were chosen with the intent to discuss the source material, not as a substitute for learning.

In my experience, both inside and outside of the classroom, course materials characteristics can deter student engagement. I saw the participants' focus on relevance and multimodal tools to be an attempt to encourage students' intrinsic motivation while simultaneously presenting some kind of extrinsic motivation in the form of points for in-class directions. This can also serve the purpose of easing some of the challenge of the assigned work by making engagement with course content less of a demanding task, potentially making the climb easier. As relevance can be fairly subjective, I felt that this focus also showed there can be many ways to a single mountain depending on who you are with.

Courses as Living Entities

While some of the instructors had fairly limited experience teaching in WGS, others had taught a variety of classes over their years as a university instructor. Nearly every participant described making alterations either during the semester or to a syllabus they had used previously. Other alterations were necessary when instructors taught in new environments or taught higher-level courses. The recurrent subthemes that make up this theme include: making changes within a semester and making changes across semesters and course. Table 4 depicts a sample of the emergent themes within each of these subthemes. To varying degrees, it became apparent to me that the instructors were in a continuous state of experimentation and revision in their planning as well as their day-to-day teaching.

Table 4

Courses as Living Entities Themes

Subthemes	Emergent Themes
Making Changes within a Semester	Flexibility Student Feedback Course Correction
Making Changes across Semesters and Courses	Updating assignments Reconsidering readings Online teaching Course level differentiation Updating knowledge to better teaching Utilizing evaluations

Making changes within a semester. In perhaps a perfect world, well-laid plans would be seamlessly implemented. However, more often than not changes were seen as necessary to best serve their students. Commonly referenced by the instructors, Jimmy explained how he saw the need for flexibility in the teaching and learning process,

So, the point A the beginning of the class first week or so that is known. This is what we are doing because without this we don't have a direction. Like you cannot have a direction without a starting point and there needs to be a foundation to the course. During that period, everybody brings in what they know like their previous academic experience, their own lived experiences even. All of that matters and then once we've established a foundation we can move forward and use that and if there's a collective kind of idea in the class where they do not feel that what I am giving is allowing them to use their experience well, then we change. I like to think linearly, and it is kind of a line going from the beginning of the semester to the end. There's just lots of side roads that we take and to that end, I think that getting off topic is really, really important. You know, it happens all the time. We will start on a class reading and end up somewhere totally different. If that's where we end up, then that matters because that is where everybody's collective knowledge and experience and goals and identities all come together in moving us in a way, I did not intend for us to go. Becoming comfortable with that is hard.

Many of the participants mentioned that through numerous years of teaching in the field, they had grown more comfortable with utilizing flexibility in their teaching. Sideroads, like those depicted by Jimmy, were commonly guided by student interest, questions, and current events. This informal feedback allowed the instructors to include or expand upon topics that may not have been planned for or relevant at the time of the instructor's planning. A self-identified atheist, Aileen was surprised by the feedback she once received from a student but nonetheless attempted to make necessary changes,

I remember in a Women's Studies class once, a woman- actually sort of funny, I'll probably never share this with her but- a woman in class shared about being an atheist and feeling that that was not an acceptable thing to say in this setting etc. etc. etc. and I felt awful. I thought I hadn't been supporting atheists in my classroom and I am an atheist, but it didn't occur to me that my position needed bolstering. And so, I tried to acknowledge them more.

Anna, however, structurally planned for student input by creating customizable projects into her course planning,

Typically, in the last 25% of my class I mean last two and a half to three weeks it's choose your own adventure scenario, which is the students through their check-ins, report to me the kinds of things they are interested in. And so, I'm creating those class days on the fly based on what they want. So, for example here at _____ one of the things that has shocked me is how many students are involved in Greek Life. I have never taught so many sorority people and frat people but, you know, why not teach-why not practice these methods of analysis on Greek Life so we- that kind of thing. So, we usually have a poll and they vote on it or whatever so the assignment sequencing but then- I hate the word module that sounds super elementary school, but you know foundations, practicing those on topics or practical applications of my choice and then their choice. That's probably consistent with a lot of classes that I teach.

Many of the instructors created formal check-ins for students to complete throughout the semester. This information allowed the instructors to keep track of the students' learning and become aware of any issues they may be encountering. The check-ins ranged from weekly to

occasional assignments. Tulip created a structured check point at which time changes could be made during the semester based on the student feedback,

I call it a survey. So, I survey the students' need, you know, some towards the middle after their midterm exams I'll be surveying them for this course. So, I survey them to see what works, what is working, and what's not. And sometimes I am able to make the change in that semester, but also, I do have the chance to make the change in the next semester . . . if, you know, something doesn't work well, I can make that change. I can decide to take one- so this semester, I used to give a paper and I saw that some of them used to rush the paper. . . . I realized that when I said the paper is due today, they are writing the night before. So, what I started doing was each- write me a short-so it's kind of a writing intensive class. They write a short blog for me and it's more work for me, but I felt that was more productive in terms of what I want them to learn. So instead of one big paper in the end of the semester, they give me these things little by little and they get grades for it each-each week.

Check-ins like these also presented the instructors with the opportunity to course correct. Depending on the feedback they received from their students, the participants could return to an issue or concept that the students may have initially misunderstood and attempt another method of covering the information. In a sense by soliciting for feedback, the instructors were giving a second chance to everyone in the room. Cordelia, on the other hand, spoke about completely removing projects from her syllabi during the semester to better fit the course to her students,

Syllabi serve such a great function, but I don't like when people treat them like concrete blocks because you don't know those students, you don't know how they're going to deal with different things. I've had projects written before that's in the syllabus that I've

totally scrapped because that class wasn't into it or it was wrong project for that class, you know? So, I think they always serve the functions for me of providing some start of the semester structure and stability.

It was important to the instructors that the semester be representative of who was in their classroom and what they needed to grow and understand the lessons being addressed. The instructors made sure that any changes made to the course was to the benefit of the students and was communicated to them well in advance. The participants viewed this need for change as a way to provide and care for their students rather than a failure to plan accordingly.

Changes to plans are common in nearly all aspects of life. Weather, health, and global events can easily disturb calendars and intentions with their looming influences on our ability to carry out actions. What I found interesting about the changes described by the participants, however, was their maintained control throughout the decision-making process. Changes within a semester were not made due to a lack of time or control but rather because they chose to intentionally make alterations. The instructors used a part of their maintained power to, in my opinion, reinforce their position as being one part of a greater community as well as to provide students with the opportunity to feel seen, heard, and cared for.

Making changes across semesters and courses. Between semesters of the same course and in transition to a new platform or course level, the instructors addressed a number of changes they experienced as the instructor of record. For semesters, Aileen has updated her assignments, a habit that appears to have had a cyclical effect over time,

I always update the assignments. I try to think about what worked and what didn't work in previous assignments to see if I can continue to make them better. Although of course

it's funny because sometimes they come full circle where it's like "oh yeah, we're back to where this was five years ago. Okay, should have just left that."

The time and skill demand of a given reading, assignment, or activity were weighed against its future potential all the while keeping in mind that no certain outcome was guaranteed to repeat itself. Having experienced an unexpected road bump in a previous class, Eli explained why he considers readings differently now,

There's one article that we read in the Women's Studies class that was really intense with economic analysis of the pay gap and they were just all of these statics and it was really getting into detail like how do you- how do we roll certain industries together and what does it mean to measure these things out and it was just it was just-complicated. And I think the students in the room didn't have sort of the math skills to be able to pick that up and say "okay what we're talking about here after taking my intro stat class and I know kind of" or maybe they've taken some poli-sci classes and they can sort of build on that. That wasn't there. So, that reading then ended up taking 45 minutes to really make sure that folks are following and kind of getting what's happening there. So, I think those kinds of choices are really- that's what is really counts when I'm making choices about is this really going to go in the syllabus or not is how much time is it going to take to get through it.

New knowledge, literature, research and conversations with other professionals in the field were also cited as reasons for altering readings and/or lessons for a given course. After using the same movie for years now, Rosie cited changing resources as reasons for making changes to her course plans,

If I want to change things up, I might show something that relates to somebody that's in the book, but I might not. Or if something ever comes out that better covers suffrage than *Iron Jawed Angels*. You know, maybe I start the semester with something different or, you know, maybe I work in different projects and maybe I highlight trans issues if I find something really good so relate to that chapter with- with in the book.

As technology has developed, the location of the classroom and the work of the instructor appears to have shifted. While online education may be more accessible, it can be a stressful adjustment for instructors who are used to the face-to-face classroom. Cordelia addressed this occurrence and offered some insight,

Creating community online is a totally different animal. Like function of it, how you facilitate it is totally different from face-to-face classrooms. But, it's the same ideas happening in a different way. There's like nothing to panic about which I think a lot of instructors do.

For many of the instructors converting to teaching online was accompanied by a greater deal of time spent grading and figuring out the necessary tools and technology. Nzingha, a graduate student, explained the strain she has experienced between wanting to develop community in her online classroom and having limited valuable time to do so,

When you are online, you're missing that obviously very important relationship and human contact with people. So, in class, I'm really interested in people learning and growing as community first and then learning, I guess, all the things that go along with the class. Online I'm really pushing hard readings, information and it's less about creating a class community, which I feel bad for because I would love to figure out the

technologies and have enough time to really prepare a class where I could create an online community, but time is-is hard.

A more seasoned online instructor, Anna explained how she adapted her teaching for online students in order to supplement her missing physical presence in her students' learning environment,

I give my students online more from the outset, more instruction in terms of explanation. So, like I might give them a big introduction to the readings which I wouldn't necessarily do in my- in person classes. I might get to all the things I would say in an introduction through class discussion as opposed to giving them kind of more of what I'm thinking about it, I tend to not do that in person but for the sake of helping contextualize the readings I give more of my own analysis to my online students first.

For Rosie, online teaching came with the challenge of encouraging a similar kind of conversation that often occurs in the face-to-face classroom and the notable preparation the form requires,

It's not so much the topic it's . . . am I going to see them in person or is it going to be online only? Because how do I get the online students to have the- not the same because it's definitely not going to be the same, but similar conversations to what we do in the classroom. Even if we, you know, break off and go into 12 different areas we're still talking, you know, on an overall theme. So that's really the only difference and of course of the online, ironically, easier I think once it gets going but definitely more difficult to put together because you just- in my mind I have to put in a lot more effort to make sure that the videos are in place and everything on that Canvas site is where it needs to be.

Most commonly, as the instructors addressed teaching courses of varying course levels, the greatest change came in the form of the expectations they had for their students. At higher

course levels, the participants expected greater depth in student thought and a higher quality of writing. For example, Paul spoke about the increase of writing his students complete in higher level courses,

usually in lower level courses where I really am trying to get them to like to absorb a set of ideas and conversations and the sort of unfolding, I tend to use take home exams. So, I'll have two big kind of a midterm and a final they usually get between seven and 10 days to work on it and it-the questions are usually some version of they will posit a sort of issue and they'll say "go in mobilized three or four of the readings that we've done in the course of this first part of the semester in order to kind of respond to this question" so, that I can assess whether they're doing the reading how well they're grasping it, and whether they can do something with it synthetically in response to a sort of broader thing. At the upper level . . . when we get to three or 400 level courses, partly because they're a little bit smaller and I-I tend to rely more on papers that are written in response to prompts so, you know, that are kind of open ended in it and essentially invite them to do the same thing, but are a little more kind of topically focused and less synthetic in terms of what other people have said and more synthetic in terms of can you take a reading that we've had and like think a thought of your own or take a position with respect to a particular question that bares on that reading?

Several of the instructors also mentioned updating their knowledge of their field and the world between semesters. This included reading new books, watching new films, familiarizing themselves with new research and attending professional development workshops. Tulip described attending a training that encouraged various forms of evaluation or her students,

I give a lot of assignments because one of the trainings I had . . . I did a course that said “give students little assignments so they could do this and do that and do” so they can kind of beef up their grade or scores depending on how you divvy up the score. So, I typically try to give the- I give quizzes, I give presentations, I give, of course, there’s the exam, and I give, you know, different things projects. And so, I try to do at least five different ways of earning a good grade. So, if, you know, something doesn't work well, I can make that change.

Andy also attending a professional development opportunity, she explained how it has changed her approach to teaching,

last summer I took a summer academy at _____ called the entrepreneur learning academy and the goal of that was to focus your course- so look at your syllabi and really explain on the first page of your syllabus what’s the big idea of the course. What are we doing in this course and what are the essential questions of the course and then right off the back, so you know what you’re teaching and that really helped me center my teaching in particular.

Lastly, many of the instructors referred to their course evaluations as being influences in the changes they made to their previous teaching approach. As described by Rosie, evaluations can be very rewarding and discouraging things to read,

I asked students from the previous semester to make comments and suggestions for future classes and so I take a look at those course evaluations and see what students, you know, offer to suggestions or of course they're going to share what they didn't like . . . my course evaluations are, you know, like 90% of its like “Rosie is amazing I love her” and the other 10% was like “I hated this” or “why did she make us do so many discussion

boards” you know, it’s like a cyclical thing. So, I like to read through those because I really do take those things into consideration and some of the suggestions have been really, really useful and things that I’ve incorporated.

Regardless of the source of information, the instructors were keen to make changes when the occasion called for it. Assignments, readings, and multimodal materials were most frequently referenced as moving pieces within the courses while their focus on engagement and community remained untouched. Focused on student growth, needs, and changing circumstance, the instructors’ courses were very rarely replicated the following semester, stressing the idea that no two climbs are and perhaps should not be the same.

Summary

Driven by the four research questions, this chapter encapsulates an introduction of the participants and the findings that were constructed through the research process. Utilizing IPA methods, four themes comprised of 11 recurrent subthemes were developed. They included: guiding students to personal and academic growth, teaching as a form of care, encouraging engagement, and courses as living entities. The participants’ experiences revealed a caring and calculated role aimed at helping students progress academically and personally. To encourage growth, the instructors carefully designed and chose challenging materials and assignments for the student to engage with outside of the classroom. Within the face-to-face classroom, the students and instructors were positioned to learn with and from one another. Over time, the courses taught by the instructors were changed and adapted, rarely being implemented in full ever again. These findings, their implications, and my research questions are the focus of the closing chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

The use of “facilitate” throughout the study was spurred from an early discomfort I experienced as a 25-year-old presented with the opportunity to teach my first course at a community college and again at 26 when I was offered a course at a public four-year university. In my early college years, I was trained as a gaming and initiative program leader at a summer camp, and the role of facilitator has felt far more comfortable than “teacher.” As my participants shared their worlds, their experiences with me, I found myself reflecting on my summer camp days, returning to the concept of facilitation. Clearly stated in the name, gaming and initiatives have goals for the group and a method to carry out them. Arguably, a good facilitator is hands-off, a guiding voice from the sideline when needed. Gaming requires group work, dedication, and discussion. Initiatives require thorough, thoughtful, and tireless planning that is never seen by the incoming group. The creative mind behind the obstacles of the day, a gaming and initiative leader’s ultimate goal is not necessarily completing the course but rather to support and empower all who step foot on it. When members of the group are vulnerable, suspended from a great height or attached by ropes, mental and physical safety become the facilitator’s top priorities. As my participants spoke, I was reminded of these essential efforts required for guiding a group to growth.

I interviewed 11 individuals from four of the largest universities in Indiana, resulting in 11 transcriptions that I analyzed and interpreted using an interpretive phenomenological approach. The themes that were constructed regarding the instructors’ experiences and efforts were: guiding students to personal and academic growth, teaching as a form of care, encouraging engagement, and courses as living entities. The themes portray the experiences and efforts of the instructors to be intentional, methodical, and care-driven. In this chapter, I revisit the research

questions, explore the significance of the findings, and acknowledge the implications of the study. Implications for teaching and theory, administration, and research as well as the limitations, delimitations, and trustworthiness are also addressed. The study concludes with a personal reflection.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to understand the experiences and efforts of instructors while teaching for a WGS program or department in a conservative state where the culture challenges the core of the academic discipline. The research questions asked (a) how do instructors in four-year institutions of higher education in Indiana experience teaching WGS courses, (b) how do WGS instructors prepare their syllabi, lesson plans, and course materials prior to the start of the course, (c) how do WGS instructors prioritize which lessons and topics are addressed throughout the semester, and (d) how do WGS instructors facilitate learning in and outside of their classrooms? The study design allowed for the phenomenon to be explored using open-ended questions that participants could choose to answer or skip depending on their comfort or willingness to share. A part of the interview time intentionally offered the participants the opportunity to speak on issues or subjects that were not addressed but were viewed by the participant as being related to the purpose of the study. The criterion sampling used in the study allowed for a large net to be cast, resulting in a moderately diverse sample.

Themes

Following the completion of 11 participant interviews with individuals who were teaching at least one WGS course at one of four institutions in a conservative state, themes were developed from coding and clustering of themes within each case and ultimately looking for patterns across the cases. The participants described adopting a purposeful role in the classroom,

setting goals and working towards them, thoughtfully interacting with students, and encouraging the undergraduates to become active participants in their own educational experience. The themes, (a) guiding students to personal and academic growth, (b) teaching as a form of care, (c) encouraging engagement, and (d) courses as living entities and the underlying recurrent subthemes depict the instructors' experiences and efforts as being intentional, methodical, and driven by the instructors' care for their students' wellbeing and success.

Guiding Students to Personal and Academic Growth

As the participants discussed who and what they have worked with in their role of instructor, the location of the university played an important role. The instructors perceived many of their students as lacking basic awareness of WGS topics such as gender identity, sexuality as a spectrum, reproductive justice, or diversity. They cited the small town and state culture as being the reason behind the students' knowledge of social justice issues and keywords. Ho and Ho (2008) have tied this lack of awareness back to ideological conservatism that they claim shapes education and socialization. The authors examined the nature in which knowledge was portrayed throughout some of the most rudimentary tales of the Christian Bible finding that depictions of knowledge often involved danger. For example, in one of the earliest passages in the Christian Bible the quest for knowledge reveals itself to be mankind's undoing in the Garden of Eden. Therefore, students influenced by a religious culture may not feel comfortable engaging with information on topics that do not complement the teachings of their church or religion.

As of 2018, the United States Census Bureau estimated the Indiana state population to be made up of approximately 79% White non-Latino or Hispanic individuals. Of the Indiana citizens above the age of 25, 25.3% had earned a bachelor's or higher degree (below the national

percentage). Taking into consideration these characteristics and that the four institutions included in this study were primarily White institutions (PWIs), the college students' addressed lack of exposure to diversity may resort in psychosocial costs (Spanierman & Heppner, 2004). White students have long benefited from racism in relation to access to societal resources, educational opportunities, social capital, and the feeling of entitlement (Ancis & Szymanski, 2001; McIntosh, 1988; Neville, Worthington, & Spanierman, 2001; Wildman, 1997). Researchers, however, have found there to be costs of racism that refer to the negative cognitive, behavioral, and affective consequences of "dominant group membership in a White supremacist system" (Todd, Spanierman, & Poteat, 2011). These costs effect both blatant perpetrators and those who adopt a more passive response to racism and diversity. Spanierman and Heppner (2004) identified three distinct costs: White empathy, White guilt, and White fear that negatively affect White students. It is important to note that these costs while negative have been explicitly referred to as incomparable to the social costs that people of color experience as a result of racism. Exposure to diversity throughout a college student's undergraduate career, however, has been shown to have a positive relationship with cognitive development (Bowman, 2009, 2010); relational, intellectual, social, and civic development (Chang, Astin, & Kim, 2004); lower racial prejudice (Denson, 2009; McClelland & Linnander, 2006; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008); and academic and social growth (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002).

Focusing on feminist scholarship, four threshold concepts have been emphasized. They include: (a) social construction of gender, (b) privilege and oppression, (c) intersectionality, and (d) feminist praxis (Hassel & Launius, 2017; Launius & Hassel, 2014). Although not in totality, the participants did reference addressing some of these concepts in their teaching approaches such as intersectionality, social construction, and oppression. Primarily these concepts were

engaged during the challenging and rewarding of the students outside of the classroom as well as inside when the instructor and students were learning with and from each other through discussion. Coined by educational theorists Meyer and Land (2005) as threshold concepts and referred to as cognitive bottlenecks by Gorski, Zenkov, Osei-Kofi, and Sapp (2013), these concepts are considered gateways to greater understanding. It has been suggested that students are incapable of progressing in the field without first crossing these thresholds by mastering their concepts. When students fully understand a threshold concept, “the hidden interrelatedness” of other topics and issues within the field are revealed (Hassel & Launius, 2017, p. 43). Generative in many disciplines, threshold concepts have been thought to be transformative, irreversible, and integrative (Meyer & Land, 2005). Additionally, crossing a threshold has been said to entail “letting go of earlier, comfortable positions and encountering less familiar and sometimes disconcerting new territory” (Land, Cousin, Meyer, & Davies, 2005, p. 54). Martin and Sullivan (2010) have referred to a similar phenomenon called a “click moment” or rather when one feels that they have been disoriented by sexism and finds their way to adopting a feminist label (p. 14). While the instructors did not explicitly aim to convert their students to feminism, some referenced their students having comparable “ah ha” moments.

Because of the transformational characteristic of these threshold concepts, Meyer and Land (2005) have used the metaphor of liminality to gain understanding of the students’ experience throughout the teaching and learning process. Termed by Turner (1969) liminality refers to a transitional space or time wherein rites or rites of passage occur. Arnold van Gennep (1960) defined rites of passage as “rites which accompany every change of place, state, social position, and age” (p. 20). van Gennep identified three phases he believed made up all rites of passage: separation from a formerly fixed point, liminality or passage “through a cultural realm

that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state,” and reaggregation or reincorporation similar to the participants reference of their students returning to the “real world” (Turner, 2006, p. 327).

To assist their students with these larger, potentially foreign concepts, the instructors thoughtfully chose assessment methods that would challenge and in time reward the students for their work. Suskie (2009) stressed the important role assessment has played in the teaching learning process. Choosing when to assess student learning is an important decision to make. For example, assessing for learning outcomes at the end of the semester does not provide the instructor with the opportunity to adjust their approach or provide feedback like that of a formative assessment. Instructors most often must choose whether they will use traditional assessments like tests and essays that check for comprehension of information or performance assessments that require a student to demonstrate their ability through application. The participants described using both methods of assessment throughout their teaching, while also using these to help them track their students’ learning.

More traditional assessments were also used to motivate students to complete the assigned readings. As Huot (1990) stated, there is no perfect method of assessment and all methods are influenced by what is being asked of the person being assessed and their background. Some of the instructors described using a variety of assessment measures to assist in creating a more accurate assessment for each student. The greater the variety of assessment methods, the more confident an instructor can be about their students’ learning process (Lane, 2014; Rezaei & Lovorn, 2010). Suskie (2018) discussed the differences between assessment and grading as the former relates to providing evidence of student learning while the later may not directly relate to the course learning goals. Depending on the instructor’s course goals,

attendance and participation may fall under grading rather than a means for assessment. Though not discussed in the interviews, Suskie also addressed the difference late policies makes in deciding if assessment or grading is occurring. If students submit work that reveals they have accomplished a learning objective but lose points due to a late submission, the author argued that grading has occurred rather than actual assessment.

Conscious of their students' in-coming knowledge and awareness, the instructors set goals for what knowledge and skills would be gained by the end of the semester. By providing their students with the appropriate vocabulary and at least a basic understanding of relevant issues and concepts, the instructors were attempting to prepare their students for what many called the "real world." By encouraging students to engage in introspection and reflection, the participants hoped to help their students understand the relevance of the course content to their past, present, and future lives. Feminist pedagogy envisions "the classroom as a liberatory environment in which we, teacher-student and student-teacher act as subjects not objects" wherein students are engaged with course materials, reflection, and others working for social change" (Shrewsbury, 1987, p. 6). As stated by Malkin and Stake (2004):

WGS pedagogists have stressed the importance of helping students to understand connections between class material and their personal experiences. WGS proponents believe that through this process student gain new perspectives on themselves and their potential, which can lead to greater confidence in their ability to participate fully in the world of work and other spheres. (p. 455)

In her own experience, hooks (1994) described the feminist classroom as a "space where teachers were willing to acknowledge a connection between ideas learned in university settings and those learned in life practices" (p.15). Although hooks went on to say that she does not

believe WGS professors are as committed to this effort as they once were, the instructors' priorities disclosed in the interviews of might suggest otherwise. Most recently, Osei-Kofi (2018) has stressed the importance of and a need for faculty development for those teaching in higher education:

It is not unusual when discussing teaching about social justice that we make the assumption that a focus on strategy—that is to say, what content to choose, how to organize lessons, and maybe even what activities to use—will achieve the outcomes we seek, without ever asking questions about the readiness of those who will carry out these strategies. There is no doubt that there are those among us who are excellent pedagogues, but the reality is one in which the majority of faculty in US higher education have no formal preparation when it comes to teaching and will either teach in the ways in which they were taught or use approaches that are consistent with the ways they experience themselves as learning most effectively, or some combination thereof. None of which is a formula for excellence in teaching. (pp. 162-163)

Teaching as a Form of Care

In their role as instructor, the participants displayed care for their students in and outside of the classroom. This theme is consistent with previous research that has found that higher education lecturers value care in their work (Fitzmaurice, 2008; Lincoln, 2000; Murray, 2006; O'Brien 2010; Walker, Gleaves, & Grey, 2006). While care and education share a long history in elementary and secondary education, little research has been conducted concerning its relationship with higher education where there has been an emphasis on creating autonomous learners (Mariskind, 2014; Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007; O'Connor, 2006). Research on care in the higher education setting has, for the most part, been conducted in the

context of university nursing programs. Many scholars have identified components of care, they include: (a) mutual respect, (b) recognition, (c) attentiveness, (d) sharing of selves, (e) role-modeling, and (f) affirmation (Appleton, 1990; Beck, 1991; Dillon & Stines, 1996; Halldorsdottir, 1990; Hanson & Smith, 1996). Researchers have, however, found that students are not only aware of their instructor's care but also that they value it (Bandura & Lyons, 2012; Lee & Ravizza, 2008; Rossiter, 1999). The participants made individual efforts to assist students in the teaching and learning process. The instructors described using one-on-one communication such as face-to-face meeting, emails, and providing written feedback as being central to their teaching approaches. Astin (1993) found that students who reported to have more access to faculty showed greater personal growth than those who did not. Research has also suggested that students can become more productive learners if their instructors show interest and care for them (Kohn, 1999). Thompson (2017), an advocate for "teaching with tenderness," detailed how the body is an important source of pedagogical information,

I have seen that I have the best chance of eliciting rich and original writing from students when I try to really understand who they are—in their bodies at this particular moment in their lives amid particular constellations of challenges they are facing now. (p. 52)

The instructor's used face-to-face meetings to check-in with students regarding their progress in the course, and education goals and emails to check on students who seemed to be struggling in the course or no longer attending classes or submitting work. This one-on-one communication also allowed for accommodations to be made on an individual basis with the goal of assisting students to reach their optimal potential.

Briefly discussed above, the formative assessments used provided the instructors with an opportunity to provide their students with feedback. It has been said that the aims of this

feedback should be to improve and accelerate student learning (Sadler, 1998). According to Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006), good feedback accomplishes seven things: (a) clarifies what good performance is, (b) facilitates self-assessment, (c) delivers information to the students about their learning, (d) encourages teacher and peer dialogue, (e) encourages positive motivation and self-esteem, (f) provides the opportunity to attain a desired performance level, and (g) provides information that can be used to help shape teaching. Providing students with feedback that they can then apply in their future work, has been viewed as an opportunity for student empowerment and to further develop autonomous, self-regulating learners.

As a way to provide for their students, many of the instructors described their role in the teaching and learning process as being one of a guide rather than a center-of-the-room instructor. Researchers have differentiated the various approaches to teaching as being either teacher- or content-centered or student-centered (Kember & Kwan, 2002; Samuelowicz & Bain, 2001). This chosen approach is often influenced by the instructor's perception of teaching (Trigwell, 2012). Individuals who see their purpose in the classroom as being knowledge sharers generally adopt a content-centered approach while those choose a student-centered approach commonly view their role as "supporting students' conceptual change" (p. 608).

In this role, the instructors purposely used their elevated position in the classroom to serve as a model and helper rather than an expert. Shrewsbury (1987) described this kind of behavior as an empowerment strategy where "the teacher's knowledge and experience is recognized and is used with the students to increase the legitimate power of all" (p. 9). Furthermore, Shrewsbury succinctly explained, "The feminist teacher is above all a role model of a leader" (p. 12). By adopting this role, the instructors centered their work first around the students and then around the content. As hooks (1994) wrote, "It is often productive if

professors take the first risk, linking confessional narratives to academic discussions so as to show how experience can illuminate and enhance our understanding of academic material” (p. 21). Showing excitement about a reading, engaging with students respectfully, and being vulnerable were the instructor’s way of creating an example for their students to follow.

The participants often discussed the importance of the classroom, stressing that student comfort and safety were high priorities. Scholars from many disciplines have discussed the influence “safe spaces” have played in their teaching. Pedagogies of wholeness require students to feel “safe enough to let down their guard, to speak, to be fully in the room” (Thompson, 2017, p. 44). Reported by many scholars across fields, students felt free if they could express their thought, ideas, and feelings more if they perceived the classroom as being a safe space that welcomed their participation, sharing, and honesty, particularly when discussing potentially difficulty topics like that of diversity and oppression (Boostrom, 1998; Chan & Treacy, 1996; Garcia & Van Soest, 1997; Holley & Steiner, 2005; Hyde & Ruth, 2002; Latting, 1990).

Similarly, Shrewsbury (1987) described a classroom led by feminist pedagogy as a space in which students can “learn to respect each other's differences rather than fear them. Such a perspective is ecological and holistic. The classroom becomes an important place to connect to our roots, our past, and to envision the future” (p. 6). Creating a safe space in the classroom, however, does not mean that student contributions will not be challenged. As Boostrom (1998) wrote,

Problems can occur when students or instructors take safe space to mean a classroom environment where all ideas are accepted equally, and where no one is challenged or made uncomfortable. It is one thing to say that students should not be laughed at for

posing a question or for offering a wrong answer. It is another to say that students must never be conscious of their ignorance. (p. 18)

Likewise, Kumashiro (2000) stated, “Educators should create safe spaces based on what they see is needed right now, but they should also constantly re-create the spaces by asking, whom does this space harm or exclude?” Safe spaces must be monitored and reconsidered throughout the teaching and learning process if an anti-oppressive education is to be granted to students.

Holley and Steiner (2005) found that safe space can be created by sharing a sense of community, showing respect, sharing honestly, being nonjudgmental, and allowing students to see one another’s faces. The instructors described their classrooms in terms of a community they fostered throughout the semester. Identified by Shrewsbury (1987) as one of the three central concepts of feminist pedagogy, community in the classroom transforms the instructor’s power from a medium for domination into potential and capacity. Shrewsbury wrote, “This is an image of power as the glue holding a community together, giving the people the opportunity to act, to move, to change conditions, for the benefit of the whole population” (p. 8). As Fuller and Russo (2016) wrote, “When we build community support and accountability in the classroom, there is less isolation, less fear, less burden, and as importantly, there are more ideas, more possibilities, and more energy for engaging, within and outside of the classroom” (p. 181). Palloff and Pratt (1999) defined online community as being a space for students to a) actively interact with the course content and through personal communication, b) learn in collaboration, c) socially construct meaning, d) share resources, and e) encourage and support each other. Arguably one of the strongest threads in feminist pedagogy across the various interpretations, building community in the classroom has been viewed as the key vehicle for a feminist education (Scerimg, 1997; Shrewsbury, 1987; Webb, Allen, & Walker, 2002). Particularly in the presence

of diversity, community has been found to increase gender egalitarianism and student activism (Astin, 1993) and over time greater perceptions of agency and ability (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991).

While driven and dedicated to their craft, the instructors were not immune to the demands of teaching. Instructor time, effort, and emotion were consistently mentioned throughout the interviews as being resources that required careful balance and use. As time and effort are necessary resources for nearly all tasks, these demands were expected and often predictable. Colton and Sparks-Langer (1993) described a teacher as someone who is constantly in action during the planning, implementation, and eventual evaluation of that work. The emotional experience of the instructors, however, was somewhat less predictable. Some of the participants referenced the state culture being the cause of negative experiences that made entering the classroom a challenge while others found themselves emotionally stirred by students sharing traumatic events. Palmer (2017) wrote:

As good teachers weave the fabric that joins them with students and subjects, the heart is the loom on which the threads are tied, the tension is held, the shuttle flies, and the fabric is stretched tight. Small wonder, then, that teaching tugs at the heart, opens the heart, even breaks the heart- and the more one loves teaching, the more heartbreaking it can be. The courage to teach is the courage to keep one's heart open in those very moment when the heart is asked to hold more than it is able so that teacher and student and subject can be woven into the fabric of community learning, and living, require. (pp. 11-12)

While emotional response has been shown to influence an individual's teaching, there are few available studies that have examined the role emotion plays in the experiences and efforts of university teachers (Trigwell, 2012). Those that have ventured into the issue have not addressed

second-hand trauma described by instructors (Gates, 2000). Researchers have known some time, however, that emotional exhaustion does play an influencing factor in compassion fatigue and instructor burnout due to the emotional labor involved in some individuals' teaching practices (Byrne, 1991). As stated by Rashedi, Plante, & Callister (2015):

Compassion fatigue is most commonly studied among healthcare workers, clergy, volunteers, and emergency care workers compared to college students or those in other professions. It has been hypothesized that compassion fatigue is more prevalent in the caregiving professions because the work requires that these professionals be present during the suffering of others. These demands can lead to depression, which decreases caregivers' emotional energy level and their ability to be empathetic to a person in need. (pp. 133-134)

Although coping measures were not addressed in the interviews, hooks (1994) has stated that such experiences require a stronger commitment to self-actualization that in time leads to better well-being.

Encouraging Engagement

Although they expressed an occasional need to partake in traditional lectures, the instructors' alternative adopted role allowed for a more collaborative and democratic process of sharing power to varying extents that is common in feminist pedagogical approaches (Bowker & Dunkin, 1992; Christie, 1997; Shrewsbury, 1987; Webb et al., 2002). Influenced by the perception of the classroom as a safe space, the instructors described their classes as being discussion-based. Brookfield and Preskill (1999) have defined the role of discussion as a "valuable and inspiring means for revealing the diversity of opinion that lies just below the surface of almost any complex issue" (p. 3). Discussion has also been described as inherently

democratic as its use acknowledges every student's right to speak and be heard (Lempert, Xavier, & DeSouza, 1995). When used strategically, discussion has the capability to accomplish all four of common threads in the major pedagogical feminist writings strongly endorsed by WGS instructors: (a) participatory learning, (b) validation of personal experience, (c) encouragement of social understanding and activism, and (d) development of critical thinking and open-mindedness (Hoffman & Stake, 1998).

Perhaps one of the most widely used pedagogical strategies, regardless of the field, utilizing discussion in the classroom has shown to help student develop critical understanding, self-awareness, appreciation for diverse perspectives, and the ability to act (Brookfield & Preskill, 1999). Additional benefits of using a discussion-based approach include: involving students in their own learning (Cooper, 1995; Leeds, Stull, & Westbrook, 1998), learning from others (Hertenstein, 1991), and developing greater cognitive skills (Delaney, 1991; Ewens, 2000; Gilmore & Schall, 1996; Wade, 1994). Discussions in the classroom can occur in many ways. Logistically speaking, however, O'Hare (1998) identified web patterns for moderated and unmoderated groups; fan patterns for introduction, lecture, demonstration, and studio scenarios; clusters for studio or breakout groups; and mixed patterns called *concerto grosso* and intermittent conventions. Each of these approaches has a specific purpose and ideal size depending on the designated outcomes for the discussion.

Seemingly hoping to avoid what hooks (1994) called passive consumers, the instructors stressed the need for students to be active, working with others, applying information to their lives, and ultimately growing as a result. As hooks wrote, the instructor "is meant to serve as a catalyst that calls everyone to become more and more engaged, to become active participants in learning" (p. 11). Considered a defining component of student engagement, active and

collaborative learning have been positively associated with successful student learning (Harper & Quaye, 2009; Kinzie, 2010; Kuh, 2005; Prince, 2004). Students actively involved in small group discussions, for example, have been found to better understand the course materials than if it were presented to them in the classroom (Ramsden, 1992). Additionally, Lea, Stephenson, and Troy (2003) described active engagement as being one of two core tenants for the student-classroom. Defined by Prince (2004), active learning includes the use of activities in the classroom that encourage collaboration and team work to accomplish the assigned task.

The activities described by the instructors often required physical movement and random-grouping to encourage students to work with a variety of others. Through these activities, students are believed to lead to deeper learning (Marton, Hounsell, & Entwistle, 1997). As stated by Tisdell (2007):

Too often in higher education, students engage in learning in strict isolation. But significant learning is often not solitary, nor are activities that facilitate social transformation; after all, social transformation is, by definition, communal. Thus, while it is important to read and absorb course material, it is also important to encourage learners to work collaboratively on some projects. These could include written book reviews and creative presentations that go along with the written review highlighting a particular theme of the book that incorporates cognitive, affective, and cultural imaginative dimensions, or projects that vision and model how the course content can be used with real communities in a way that is culturally responsive to them. Such collaborative work serves three purposes: (1) it connects learners with each other and with real communities; (2) it relates theory to real-life practice; (3) it encourages the

embodiment and modeling of ideas in cognitive, affective, and cultural imaginative ways to the entire class. (p. 555)

Though not heavily referenced by the participants, instructional technology has shown to positively influence active and collaborative learning in the classroom (Chen, Lambert, & Guidry, 2010; Nelson Laird & Kuh, 2005). By focusing on student engagement, instructors are assisting their students in becoming autonomous learners (Ramsden, 2003). Shrewsbury (1987) has described this independence as being one of three strategies employed in the feminist classroom to encourage student empowerment.

Although the instructors felt their adopted approach of learning together was a strength, many mentioned challenges that presented throughout their time teaching. The participants described having to adapt to differing and sometimes unexplainable classroom dynamics that made their work in the classroom slightly more difficult. Although classroom dynamic has been shown to be measurable and can be influenced by many factors, overcoming a negative dynamic has remained a commonly occurring obstacle for instructors of many fields to overcome (Chan & Treacy, 1996; Davin & Donato, 2013; Hodges, 2002; Skopek & Schuhmann, 2008). Student traits such as confidence, class traits such as emotional climate, and instructor traits and techniques such as gender and teaching approach are believed to play impactful roles in creating this course dynamic (Fassinger, 1995; Nunn, 1996).

While some of the instructors felt comfortable with larger classes, more often than not, smaller class sizes were viewed as key components to the success of their teaching. Class size has been found to have a significant effect on classroom participation in discussion in which larger class sizes challenge the potential for a lively class discussion (Constantinople, Cornelius, & Gray, 1988; Crawford & MacLeod, 1990; Fassinger, 1995; Howard, Short, & Clark, 1996).

Howard, James, and Taylor (2002) have stated that the larger the class, the more likely it is that a small group of students will assume the responsibility to fill the silence that may follow an instructor's questions. As described by Krohn et al., (2010) this can create an imbalance in the classroom wherein some students are not participating while others feel obligated to overextend themselves throughout the course.

Referred to in the literature as carefully managing the time given to a topic or to each side of the topic, the challenge of balancing discussion in the participants' interviews referred to making sure many voices and perspectives were included in the classroom conversation. Often written about in the context of an instructor giving or presenting a discussion to their students, the participants' discussions were participatory and shared amongst those in the classroom. In an attempt to balance student participation in discussions, researchers and instructors have manipulated various elements in the classroom including: receiving credit with and without self-recording and self-recording with and without receiving credit (Krohn et al., 2010), online versus face-to-face discussion environments (Sproull & Kiesler, 1991), awarding extra credit tokens (Boniecki & Moore, 2003), peer-evaluations (Gopinath, 1999), and self-evaluations and self-grading (Howard et al., 2002). While some approaches have shown to increase and/or assist with balancing student participation in discussions, the quality of these credit-driven contributions, the dependability of their judgements, and the fairness and dependability of the practices has been questioned (Dancer & Kamvounias, 2005). Jacobs and Chase (1992) also questioned the ethics of grading participation as it may penalize less extroverted students and requires that the instructor create an objective grading criterion that may be difficult to justify. While students' age and gender have been argued as influencing variables in classroom participation, previous research including the instructor's gender as an additional influencing variable has produced

fairly inconclusive results (Boersma, Gay, Jones, Morrison, & Remick, 1981; Crombie, Pyke, Silverthorn, Jones, & Piccinin, 2003; Hall & Sandler, 1982; Howard & Henney, 1998; Tatum, Schwartz, Schimmoeller, & Perry, 2013).

In preparation for the semester, the instructors thoughtfully chose course materials such as textbooks, novels, research articles, and digital media they hoped would engage their students. Most commonly five major categories are used for selection criteria when choosing printed materials: (a) subject-matter content, (b) social content, (c) instructional design, (d) readability, and (e) production quality (Young & Reigeluth, 1988). These categories have been shown to change according discipline. For example, Williams (1983) suggested that completeness should be evaluated when choosing a text for an English language textbook. In congruence with their goals for application and growth, the instructors chose materials for their courses based on their subject-matter content, social content, and readability, choosing materials they felt were relevant and accessible for their students.

In this decision-making process, the instructors also considered the materials' ability to complement one another as well as their age and cost. Rather than searching for a complete text, the instructors often selected materials they felt could be paired with others to complete the issue or topic. According to United States Government Accountability Office's (2005) report on college textbooks, prices have risen an average of six percent each year from 1987 to 2004. The report stated that since 1986 the price of textbooks nearly tripled, resulting in textbook costs close to \$1,000 per semester. Printed materials such as the textbook are also susceptible to outlasting their relevance requiring the purchase of new texts of higher price (Williams, 1983). Throughout this process, however, the participants described weighing the age and relevancy of the materials sometimes favoring an older text to stress the unchanging status of an issue.

While choosing these course materials, many of the instructors described pairing them with technology and multimodal resources into the classroom to help their students learn. These multimodal materials included internet accessible assets such as YouTube videos, music streaming, and films. “Multimodal” was coined by members of the New London Group in 1996 (Gourlay, 2010). Noticing a shift in Western culture, Cope and Kalantzis (2000), Kress (2003, 2005) and Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) believed that communication and therefore learning was no longer limited to a singular mode such as reading the words in a textbook but rather through two or more mediums like the combination of image and text used in comic books. Kress (2003) has also argued that this shift includes a move towards the digital screen where emphasis is often placed on images and visual layout. Advances in technology have made multimodality far more accessible in that they “can be operated by one multi-skilled person, using one interface, one mode of physical manipulation” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001, p. 2). Scholars have noted the ways in which multimodality has been embraced by those in higher education most traditionally with the use of PowerPoint that employs images, photographs, illustrations, videos, and composition to convey meaning in the classroom. It is possible this has been an intentional shift to accommodate traditional-aged college students who have been referred to as “digital natives” as they have for the most part grown up with the access and knowledge to use technology (Birch & Sankey, 2008; Moreno & Mayer, 2007; Prensky, 2001). Multimodal learning environments welcome the use of visual and auditory modes, allowing students to learn in ways they are familiar and comfortable with while also challenged them to learn new things (Chen & Fu, 2003; Picciano, 2009). The use of visualizations such as videos and films has been linked to (1) promoting learning by providing an external representation of the information, (2) deeper processing of information, and (3) maintaining learner attention by

making the information more attractive and motivating, hence making complex information easier to comprehend (Shah & Freedman, 2003). Furthermore, Fadel (2008) has found that the use of multimodal materials had led students to perform better than those who used single mode resources.

Courses as Living Entities

As the participants described their experiences throughout the academic semester, many highlighted a need to be flexible and make changes within a given course. Cornelius and Gordon (2008) found that the instructors focused on their students' needs most often displayed flexibility in content delivery and study strategies. Collis, Vingerhoets, and Moonen (1997) identified five areas in which instructor flexibility can be demonstrated: (a) time, (b) content, (c) entry requirements, (d) instructional approach and resources, and (e) delivery and logistics. As described by Carey and Gregory (2003),

Conscientious instructors . . . may make a mid-course correction to spend extra time on a topic after disappointing class performance on an examination. In an informal sense, the instructor is using outcomes assessment; that is, he or she has developed a good idea of what the students are to learn, measures are being taken of how well it is being learned, and the results are being applied for guiding and improving learning (p. 215).

The changes described in the interviews were prompted by instructor observation, class polling, and individual student feedback provided via structured check-ins and resulted in spending more or less time on certain topics, changing or removing assignments, and/or implementing new activities.

The participants encouraged their students to use their voice in the classroom to help guide the course, in a sense they were encouraging the students to claim of their education.

Shrewsbury (1987) described this action as being necessary for the empowerment of students as it provides them with the “opportunities and abilities to develop their thinking about the goals and objectives they wish and need to accomplish individually and collectively” (pp. 8-9). The instructors prioritized the students’ input to such a degree that many described partially tailoring their courses to students’ expressed interest or needs. Through prioritizing techniques such as these, researchers have found that WGS courses have successfully helped students develop more egalitarian attitudes towards gender roles (Harris, Melaas, & Rodacker, 1999; Stake & Hoffmann, 2001), appreciate and accept diversity (Malkin & Stake, 2004), become more aware of social inequalities such as sexism (Brush, Gold, & White, 1978; Howe, 1985; Stake & Rose, 1994), and become more confident (Brush et al., 1978; Stake & Gerner, 1987; Stake & Rose, 1994).

Notable changes were also addressed by the instructors between semesters and courses due to the perceived need to adapt and make changes for student success. With internet access increasing each year, a continuously growing trend in education is online instruction. The participants spoke about adjusting their teaching to the new platform. According to Schrum, Burbank, Engle, Chambers, and Glassett (2005) 89% of four-year public institutions offered online education options. Allen and Seaman (2007) estimated that approximately 3.5 million students or close to 25% of undergraduate students were enrolled in online courses at American colleges and universities. The researchers also found that 35% of higher education institutions offered at least one academic program completely online. Beck (2010) reported that 100% of public institutions have stated that online education was a crucial part of their long-term plans. Many have viewed online education as a viable method of providing instruction at a reduced cost

(Garbett, 2011). Crawford-Ferre and Wiest (2012) claimed that online course offerings were increasing at a higher rate than traditional face-to-face course offerings.

Cornell (1999) described this trend as requiring instructors to learn and engage with a variety of technologies in order to fulfill their duties as an instructor. With such reported growth and focused plans for online education, one may assume that online teacher education is also being stressed. However, Gabriel and Kaufield, (2008) found that few college faculty members have had any type of pedagogical training for online instruction. Furthermore, most instructors new to teaching online have been shown to have no training or preparation for it (Fish & Wickersham, 2009; Gabriel & Kaufield, 2008). According to Gallien and Oomen-Early (2008) effective online course delivery involves far more than simply repackaging the contents used for in a face-to-face course. An example of this poor but common practice includes the simple posting of presentation slides and lecture notes on the online platforms rather than performing additional efforts (Dunlap, Sobel, & Sands, 2007). Researchers have suggested that this training should cover restructuring course content delivery and curriculum sequencing (Cornelius & Glasgow, 2007), communication and relationship building with online students (Dykman & Davis, 2008), and online pedagogy and technology (Gabriel & Kaufield, 2008). Attention has also been given to the additional time that online teaching requires of the instructor. Researchers have advocated for reduced teaching loads for online instructors to support the quality of their teaching and engagement with their students (Major, 2010; White, Brown, & Sugar, 2007; Winkler-Prins, Weisenborn, Group, & Arbogast, 2007).

At various times throughout the preparation processes described by the participants, the instructors took time to reflect on their previous experiences with the chosen materials, means of assessment, or course goals. Colton and Sparks-Langer (1993) referred to this action as making

the instructor a “reflective decision maker” (p. 45). By evaluating their motivations, goals, plans, previous results the instructors are engaging in efforts to grow in their roles. The researchers identified seven categories of knowledge for teachers to employ in their reflection; they included: (a) content, (b) students, (c) pedagogy, (d) context, (e) prior experiences, (f) personal views, (g) values, and (h) scripts. Furthermore, they believe that it is efficacy, flexibility, social responsibility, and consciousness that drives an instructor to act as reflective decision maker. The participants described utilizing student evaluations to assist with this reflective work. Previous experiences, time requirements, and complexity of a lesson were given consideration during the individual’s time of reflection. Through these reflections, assignments were updated, readings were reconsidered or replaced, and lessons or activities that have proved successful in the past were kept knowing that there were no assurances they would prove successful in the future.

Implications

The findings of the study provide greater insight into the experiences and efforts of WGS instructors teaching in a conservative state. In this section, I consider the various implications for practice based on the findings of this study. I chose and designed this study in part to help improve my own understanding and teaching approach. I also felt that many could learn from the participants’ openness and honesty, inviting them to consider their own methods. As a fairly new instructor, I had previously formed ideas of what it was like to teach WGS, the findings revealed through this study validate my own thoughts to a degree but have vastly expanded my perceptions of the role of the instructor and as well as the purpose of a WGS education. Discussed below are implications for teaching and theory, administration, and research.

Teaching and Theory

Having taught for a WGS program at a public-four-year institution for nearly three years now, there are still an immense number of things I have yet to learn, adopt, or consider. What amazed me, however, was the joy and appreciation the instructors, many who have been in the field far longer than I, expressed at the opportunity to sit and reflect. Before the interview began or after the recording device had stopped, many of the individuals commented they had enjoyed the opportunity to be introspective and even critical of their own experience and efforts. They would stop, visibly, carefully considering their next words and with a smile find a combination that suited them. When asked to describe their teaching philosophies, most commonly the instructors mentioned having a longer, prepared version stowed away like those examined by Fitzmaurice (2008). Not having immediate access to these files, the participants then took just a moment to consider what their current viewpoints actually were. I believe it would be incredibly advantageous to create an instructor check-in with which intrinsically-motivated individuals could engage. Said check-in should require that the user first articulate their teaching philosophy and continue on to inspect the ways in which their goals are or are not supported by their facilitation technique in their classroom. The check-in should present an opportunity to examine the user's care for their students, their attempts to encourage engagement, and their feelings towards flexibility in their teaching. Such a tool could help support aligning instructor efforts more closely with the goals of a WGS education.

The findings of this study highlight the intentional, methodical, and care-driven nature of the role of WGS instructors and the efforts involved therein. Returning to the needs expressed during the MRGSC meeting detailed in Chapter One, the methods described above could also be applied in teacher education programs or new faculty workshops to draw attention to the many

opportunities available to instructors to support student growth via their facilitation.

Descriptions of the instructors' various techniques such as checking in with their students, grouping students for discussion, challenging student intellect outside of the classroom, building community within the educational space, and pairing course materials can also provide WGS educators and others who utilize feminist pedagogy with new strategies to utilize in their classrooms. Although they are unlikely to enter into the classroom looking to understand the role of their instructor, I do believe the findings could be utilized to help students comprehend their instructor's purpose and dedication in their educational and personal lives. As undergraduate students are most commonly unfamiliar with feminist pedagogy, this study could also increase transparency in the feminist classroom by helping university students better understand why and how the feminist classroom varies from others, potentially increasing their own investment in the course and their performance within. The findings of this study also have the potential to present WGS as a desirable field for students who may feel detached, invisible, or unmotivated by their experiences in academia thus far.

Stressing the role of the instructor in the classroom, I believe the findings may also be utilized in the ongoing understanding of Meyer and Land's (2005) liminal classroom metaphor. Positioning a social justice/WGS education as a possible rite of passage, as defined by van Gennep (1960) for modern day college students, scholars may gain a better understanding of how students can be challenged with and guided through the liminal stage and prepared for reintegration into a heteropatriarchal society. This examination of the adopted role of the instructor, the tools and challenges engaged, and the facilitation methods used throughout the period of time within a feminist-normative classroom may progress the understanding of social justice education as being a transformational experience clear of indoctrination or conversion.

Administration

As expressed by the participants, a great deal of time, effort, and emotion goes into their preparation and even more so in their facilitation. The instructors' use of individualized care such as emails, face-to-face meetings, and thorough feedback are perhaps some of the more time-consuming methods the instructors used to see after their students' wellbeing and success in their class. As addressed by some of the participants, they were able to care for their students because of the smaller class sizes they were assigned. The findings of this study suggest that this labor of care be taken into consideration when determining teaching loads for WGS instructors. Furthermore, it may also be conducive to provide WGS instructors with resources and the opportunity to be in community with others in the field as a way to encourage their own self-actualization and success in the classroom as the instructor.

Given the growing demand for online education and the admitted lack of knowledge or experience with online tools, the findings also suggest that online training should be encouraged for instructors new to online teaching and for those whose online platforms are not using resources that encourage student engagement, empowerment, and growth. A training such of this would need to explore the approaches and resources available for fostering community, group discussion, and group work. As time is once again an issue for larger class sizes, even in distance education, it would also be beneficial to address successful assignment design and feedback creation for online learners in the training as well.

Research

The findings of this study show the instructors put a great deal of time and effort into caring for their students individually and as a group. While some studies have shown a positive correlation between instructor care and student academic performance, student perceptions of the

care should also be taken into consideration (Astin, 1993; Kohn, 1999; Thayer-Bacon et al., 1998). In studies of K-12 education, perceptions of teacher care have shared a positive relationship with higher attendance rates (Cornelius-White, 2007; Goodenow, 1993), positive learning attitudes (Finn, 1989; Rosenfeld, Richman, & Bowen, 2000; Teven & McCroskey, 1997; Wentzel, 1997) the amount of time students spent studying (Rosenfeld, Richman, & Bowen, 2000), as well as academic achievement (Klem & Connell, 2004), and risk behavior resistance (Voisin et al., 2005). Research in higher education has identified instructor care has a valued influence on students but offers little beyond this finding (Bandura & Lyons, 2012; Lee & Ravizza, 2008; Rossiter, 1999). Quantitative and qualitative methods should be used to measure student perceptions of their instructor's care for them as an individual student, their success and growth, as well as the instructor's care for the class as a whole. These variables should be cross-examined with the student's attendance, self-assessed participation, success throughout the course, and social justice-related altitudinal measures. Further work should compare these findings to non-WGS courses samples collected from conservative, moderate, and liberal states.

The participants' efforts, and therefore the findings, suggest that relevance of the course materials and topics were viewed as an integral part of encouraging student engagement in the course. A comparative analysis focused on student and instructor perceptions of relevance could support or challenge this assumption and its function in the WGS classroom. Many of the instructors felt a responsibility to prepare their students for the world experience after college. While self-assessments of perceived readiness may be used to check for discrepancies for what instructors believe themselves to be doing through their teaching, I believe a more in-depth study would be needed to appropriately investigate the influence of as WGS course on student readiness. A longitudinal, qualitative study of WGS students and the experiences they have prior

to strategically planned check-ins would provide a more reliable understanding of the use of a WGS education and its perceived ability to prepare students for the world-at-large. Qualitative methods are preferable as they would require the participant to engage in reflection and meaning-making for an extended period of time, potentially increasing the richness of the data compared the time it would take to complete a survey.

The overarching goal of the instructors' facilitation was growth in multiple forms. While physical observation would provide a great deal of data to further knowledge concerning how growth is encouraged in the classroom, it could also be detrimental to the natural dynamic of the class. I believe a content analysis of the course syllabi, assignment descriptions, and offered feedback could provide researchers with a better understanding of how facilitation of learning and growing occurs through written word, paying close attention to the transparency of the language and objectives of each aspect, respectively. Students participating in the study should also be assessed for academic improvement over the course of the semester. Of course, this work assumes that students are reading the syllabus, descriptions, and feedback closely enough to mobilize them. A self-assessment of students' dependence on this written information may improve the reliability of a study such as this.

Finally, attention was given to the location of the universities by the instructors. Local culture, politics, and current events influenced the courses to varying degrees. These changes to the prepared course were possible due to the instructor's acceptance of and use of flexibility in their teaching. To better understand this phenomenon, a content analysis of course syllabi in several conservative states paired with instructor interviews following the completion of a semester may provide insight into how a course responds to the social world around it. The interviews should focus on topics and issues discussed, paying close attention to changes or

adjustments to the proposed calendar provided in the syllabus or on the online platforms. It would be advantageous to compare the results of face-to-face classrooms to online or distance education courses to infer the flexibility allotted to each environment.

Limitations, Delimitations, and Trustworthiness

For further transparency and to support the trustworthiness of the study, I will explore the limitations and delimitations of the completed work. Being that the presented study is qualitative in nature, the limitations involved therein differ from those that have utilized quantitative methods. Common areas of critique for quantitative studies such as sample size or generalizability may contradict the purposely smaller sampling of qualitative work. Rather than looking for a broader application of the findings, qualitative research aims for a deeper “understanding of complex human issues” (Marshall, 1996, p. 524). While quantitative research upholds generalizability as a measure of utility, qualitative researchers look to the transferability or the possible application of the findings in similar settings (Flick, 2009; Marshall, 1996).

Because this qualitative study used a sample size that was fairly large for an IPA study but small compared to quantitative methods, the findings may be transferable to WGS instructors who are also teaching at public 4-year universities in a conservative state but are not generalizable to the larger population of WGS instructors in the United States of America. Depending on the reader and their points of evaluation, this characteristic has been seen as both a limitation and a strength of the method (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009). Other arguable limitations of the study include the heavy time demand and subjectivity that are inherently present throughout qualitative methods. Although rich, thick description and reflexivity are used to support the credibility of study, they simultaneously increase the amount of time needed to complete the work.

The delimitations, or the aspects of the phenomenon the study would not address, should also be taken into consideration (Wolcott, 2009). To support potential transferability of the findings, the study focused on large, public, four-year universities within a single conservative state. I specifically excluded the 62 other institutions in the state that included: 37 private not-for-profit, 13 private for-profit, and 12 public institutions. To support the depth and focus of the study, the sample was limited to individuals who were teaching at the time the study took place and did not include individuals who had previously taught for the WGS programs or departments. The study explored the experiences and efforts of 11 out of the total 45 potential participants. Following the aim of qualitative research to better understand the experience of the phenomenon, the interview scripts pertained to the instructor's work before the start of the semester as well as during their teaching, needing the participants to engage in reflection and meaning-making. Interviews were conducted face-to-face at a mutually agreed upon location to encourage the collection of rich data. Participant demographics were not used in the data analysis as this would have likely rendered them recognizable. The delimitations of this study align with those of qualitative research wherein individuals' perceptions are highly valued and seen as the key to greater understanding.

To support the trustworthiness of the study at hand, I engaged reflexivity throughout. Beginning with my positionality included in Chapter 1, I have attempted to be transparent in my motives and perspectives. As a WGS instructor at a public, four-year institution in Indiana, I was able to maintain prolonged engagement in the field. Just as I work to do with my students, I built and maintained rapport with my participants. I created and updated an audit trail that details the date on which each step of the research process was taken. Throughout this process, I kept a researcher journal and made notes in it during the interview transcription creation and data

analysis. Finally, through the presentation of interview excerpts, participant descriptions, and additional details, I provided thick, rich description aimed at giving the reader a sense of the individuals' distinctive traits.

Conclusion

In my own educational journey, I have found the acquisition of new knowledge is often accompanied by a humbling recognition of the elusive nature of certainty. Succinctly put, the more I learn, the less I truly know. Through this search for greater understanding, I find myself overwhelmed with more questions than answers. The generosity and vulnerability of my participants has cracked open the door and invited me and the reader inside. What has been revealed is a commitment to not only perform the task at hand, to teach, but to do in such a manner that the students are encouraged by their environment, surrounding people, course materials, and assigned tasks to improve themselves through this exposure. As a WGS instructor in Indiana, I have been inspired by these individuals, their devotion, and their eye for opportunity. In my teaching and interactions with my students I find myself returning to these conversations, to these findings and looking for areas in which my efforts can better support my goals, my students' goals, and our overall wellbeing.

Indiana is a lot of things. For the past 28 years it has been train whistles and summertime cicadas, Dennis Rodman-tall corn fields and John Cougar Mellencamp love stories. Indiana is fast cars and bad roads, bits of James Dean cool and lots of Jim Davis funny. It is home to one-stoplight towns and busy crossroads, David Letterman's gap-toothed smile and Cole Porter's smooth jazz. This state is overhead airplanes and starry skies, Bob Ross' happy accidents and Bobby Knight's unadulterated rage. Indiana is comfort and contradiction and for many of us it is friend and foe.

Having spent the majority of my life in Indiana, my relationship with it is far more complex than love-hate. Many of us Hoosiers are familiar with the intangible tension that exists in this place of anti-abortion laws and gay pride parades. This is perhaps best captured by the speech given by the governor of Indiana, Eric Holcomb, at Ball State University's May commencement. Almost two weeks after signing into law two measures that restrict the availability of abortion in the state, Governor Holcomb's speech drove home the message "stay in Indiana." "Stay" is a message that need only be given when many are fleeing or have fled. The reasons to leave a state that does not protect its citizens are many. While same-sex marriage is now legal in Indiana, conversion therapy still remains a lawful option for parents and guardians of queer minors. Furthermore, Indiana currently does not provide any legal protections from discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity in relation to employment or housing for those not employed by the state. One's will or ability to stay in such a place is continuously challenged by the very people asking them to do so.

To stay, in this context, means to endure; to endure being invalidated, restricted, and put at constant risk. For those social justice-minded, to stay also means to fight; to take each day, each challenge and to work to move forward against the prevailing forces. In this light, Governor Holcomb's insistence to stay becomes a proffered challenge. It becomes an invitation to stand in opposition of conservative legislation that drives out our neighbors, teachers, school counselors, and friends.

Another notable challenge is the lack of support for WGS programs and departments within this state and across the nation. As described in Chapter One, the field of WGS has a long history of criticisms, threatening the security of WGS in higher education. As universities look to increase their profits and cut expenses, WGS programs are in a perilous position. More

specifically, speaking of the four universities included in this study, only one had a WGS department while the other three were classified as programs. While the difference between a program and department is commonly misunderstood by those not in higher education or administration, the influence of the classification can most obviously be seen in the resources allotted to each.

According to their website, the one WGS department included in the study currently employs 12 professors, one lecturer, a chairperson, and numerous affiliate faculty. The remaining academic programs employ as few as one and as many as three professors, a program chair, and affiliate faculty. Affiliate faculty can be incredibly valuable assets for smaller academic programs, sometimes teaching the majority of the offered classes. I have learned, however, that this can negatively impact the quality of teaching occurring when individuals have not been thoroughly vetted. The lack of allocated resources to these programs greatly limits their ability to provide enough sections to satisfy student demands, sometimes requiring instructors to increase their courses sizes. Increased class sizes may challenge instructors' pedagogical approach and hinder the students learning experience. Lastly, with limited personnel academic programs may struggle to provide diverse course offerings, further limited the students' exposure and success.

Perhaps the beauty of it, is that there are still professional in the field who are willing to do the work with whatever resources they can get their hands on. There are still individuals who are lonely, tired, and frustrated, but they are still willing to put their students' wellbeing and success first. It is these people and their will to carry on that I am inspired by. The fight for security in academic spaces is long, tenuous, and ambiguous, differing between institutions and

administrative leadership. Unfortunately, the struggle for social equity continues on, but luckily it is with both mind and heart that the work is being done.

Summary

Chapter Five offered a summary of the research questions and joined the findings of this study with relevant literature. The implications for teaching and theory, administration, and research were discussed and proposed. A summary of the limitations, delimitations, and trustworthiness was also provided. In conclusion of the study, I provided a personal reflection of my experience as the primary investigator, a resident of Indiana, and as a WGS instructor.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A – IRB Approval



Office of Research Integrity
Institutional Review Board (IRB)
2000 University Avenue
Muncie, IN 47306-0155
Phone: 765-285-5070

DATE: May 24, 2018

TO: Ashleigh Bingham, M.A.

FROM: Ball State University IRB

RE: IRB protocol # 1170058-1

TITLE: Women's and gender studies instruction: Teaching to replace the renaissance man in the face of conservatism

SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: APPROVED

DECISION DATE: May 24, 2018

REVIEW TYPE: **EXEMPT**

The Institutional Review Board reviewed your protocol on May 24, 2018 and has determined the procedures you have proposed are appropriate for exemption under the federal regulations. As such, there will be no further review of your protocol, and you are cleared to proceed with the procedures outlined in your protocol. As an exempt study, there is no requirement for continuing review. Your protocol will remain on file with the IRB as a matter of record.

Exempt Categories:

	Category 1: Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as (i) research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or (ii) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.
X	Category 2: Research involving the use of educational test (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior
	Category 3: Research involving the use of educational test (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior that is not exempt under category 2, if: (i) the human subjects are elected or appointed officials or candidates for public office; or (ii) Federal statute(s) require(s) without exception that the confidentiality of the personally identifiable information will be maintained throughout the research and thereafter.
	Category 4: Research involving the collection of study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or

	if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.
	Category 5: Research and demonstration projects which are conducted by or subject to the approval of Department or agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate or otherwise examine: (i) public benefit or service programs; (ii) procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs; (iii) possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under these programs.
	Category 6: Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies, (i) if wholesome foods without additives are consumed or (ii) if a food is consumed which contains a food ingredient at or below the level and for a use found to be safe, by the Food and Drug Administration or approved by the Environmental Protection Agency or the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Editorial Notes:

1. Approved with signed consent (taped interviews).

While your project does not require continuing review, it is the responsibility of the P.I. (and, if applicable, faculty supervisor) to inform the IRB if the procedures presented in this protocol are to be modified or if problems related to human research participants arise in connection with this project. **Any procedural modifications must be evaluated by the IRB before being implemented, as some modifications may change the review status of this project.** Please contact (ORI Staff) if you are unsure whether your proposed modification requires review or have any questions. Proposed modifications should be addressed in writing and submitted electronically to the IRB (<http://www.bsu.edu/irb>) for review. Please reference the above IRB protocol number in any communication to the IRB regarding this project.

Reminder: Even though your study is exempt from the relevant federal regulations of the Common Rule (45 CFR 46, subpart A), you and your research team are not exempt from ethical research practices and should therefore employ all protections for your participants and their data which are appropriate to your project.

D. Clark Dickin, PhD/Chair
Institutional Review Board

Christopher Mangelli, JD, MS, MEd, CIP/
Director
Office of Research Integrity

Appendix B – Recruitment Email

Dear _____(Instructor Name)_____,

My name is Ashleigh Bingham, and I am a doctoral student in the Adult, Community, and Higher Education program, as well as Graduate Assistant for the Women's and Gender Studies program at Ball State University. I am currently working on my dissertation and would love to be able interview you regarding your experience teaching __ (Women's Studies, Women's & Gender Studies, Gender Studies, or Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies) __ at a university in Indiana.

The purpose of my study is to understand the experiences and efforts of instructors while teaching for a WGS program or department in a conservative state where the culture challenges the core of the academic discipline. The goal of the study is to increase understanding of the teaching and learning process through (WS/WGS/WGSS) education and highlight applicable teaching strategies for others in similar situations.

The interview will last approximately 60 to 90 minutes at a time and place that is convenient for you. If interested I will happily send you the informed consent information to review and we can schedule a time that works.

If you have any questions regarding this study, please feel free to contact myself or the Ball State IRB by phone (765) 285-5070 or at irb@bsu.edu.

Thank you for your time & effort,

Ashleigh "Bing" Bingham, M.A.
Doctoral Assistant & Instructor, Women's & Gender Studies Program
Ball State University | Muncie, IN
Board of Directors, YWCA Muncie
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Appendix C – Informed Consent

Study Title

Women's and gender studies instruction: Teaching to replace the renaissance man in the face of conservatism

Study Purpose and Rationale

The purpose of this study is to understand the experiences and efforts of instructors while teaching for a WGS program or department in a conservative state where the culture challenges the core of the academic discipline. The study aims to understand the experiences of Women's and Gender Studies instructors as they prepare, prioritize, and facilitate learning opportunities throughout their classes. Currently, the literature surrounding the teaching and learning involved in feminist education focuses on the experience and benefits of the students, however, outside of feminist theory and pedagogy little is known the instructor's contribution to process.

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

Participants must currently be teaching one or more courses offered by a Women's and Gender Studies/Women's Studies/Women's, Gender, Sexuality Studies program or department at Indiana University-Bloomington, Purdue University, Indiana University-Purdue University-Indianapolis, or Ball State University.

Participation Procedures and Duration

For this study, you will be asked to partake in a 60 to 90-minute interview in which you will be asked to describe (a) your experiences teaching (b) how you prepare their syllabi, lesson plans, and course materials prior to the start of the course (c) how you prioritize which lessons and topics are addressed throughout the semester and (d) how you facilitate learning in and outside of their classrooms? You will also be asked to supply a syllabus for each of the courses you are actively teaching. During the interview, you will be asked to connect your experiences with the information provided on the syllabus.

Audio or Video Tapes (if applicable)

For the purpose of accuracy, with your permission, the interview will be audio recorded. Any names used on the audio file can and will be changed to pseudonyms when transcribed by request of the participant.

Data Confidentiality or Anonymity

Actions will be taken to preserve the confidentiality of the data by using pseudonyms, no identifying information such as the individual's names will appear in any publication or presentation of the data. Data gathered during this study will be kept confidential. Only the researcher, Ashleigh Bingham, and faculty advisor, Dr. Thalia Mulvihill, will have access to the interview recordings and transcriptions.

Storage of Data and Data Retention Period

Paper data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's office indefinitely for future clarification and reference purposes as needed. All recordings will be destroyed within 5

years of the initial interview date. Audio files and transcripts (i.e., raw data) will be housed in a secure Box folder accessible to the Principal Investigator and dissertation committee chair.

Risks or Discomforts

There are no anticipated risks for participating in this study.

Who to Contact Should You Experience Any Negative Effects from Participating in this Study

Should you experience any feelings of anxiety, please contact a counseling service in your local area. You will be responsible for any payment required for said services.

Benefits

There are no anticipated benefits from participating in this study.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time, without fear of negative repercussions. If you have any questions about this consent form, the process in general, or at any time during the study please ask the researcher at any time. You can contact the researcher, Ashleigh Bingham, at 765-285-5451 and email anbingham@bsu.edu if you have any questions. You may also contact the course instructor Dr. Mulvihill, 765-285-5463 with any questions.

IRB Contact Information

For one's rights as a research subject, you may contact the following: For questions about your rights as a research subject, please contact the Director, Office of Research Integrity, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306, (765) 285-5070 or at irb@bsu.edu.

Consent

I, _____, agree to participate in this research project entitled, *Women's and Gender Studies Instruction: Teaching to replace the renaissance man in the face of conservatism*. I have had the study explained to me and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have read the description of this project and give my consent to participate. I understand that I will receive a copy of this informed consent form to keep for future reference.

To the best of my knowledge, I meet the inclusion/exclusion criteria for participation (described on the previous page) in this study.

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher Contact Information

Principal Investigator:
Ashleigh Bingham, M.A.
Adult, Community & Higher Education
Ball State University
Muncie, IN 47306

Faculty Supervisor:
Dr. Thalia Mulvihill
Educational Studies
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Muncie, IN 47306

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Appendix D – Interview Protocol

Research Questions:

RQ 1: How do instructors in four-year institutions of higher education in Indiana experience teaching WGS courses?

RQ 2: How do WGS instructors prepare their syllabi, lesson plans, and course materials prior to the start of the course?

RQ 3: How do WGS instructors prioritize which lessons and topics are addressed throughout the semester?

RQ 4: How do WGS instructors facilitate learning in and outside of their classrooms?

Pseudonym:

Interview Questions

Experience

1. What words would you use describe your experience teaching WS/WGS/ or WGSS in Indiana?
2. Would you mind sharing a few examples of experiences that embody those words?

Preparation

3. Is there a specific teaching philosophy you follow?
4. Prior the beginning of the semester, what kind of preparation process do you partake in?
 - a. Please explain how your syllabus is involved in this process.
5. Does this process differ from new classes or classes you are teaching for the first time?
6. Does the location of the classroom (online or face-to-face) impact how you prepare for teaching?
7. Do you think the level of the course influences your preparation? What about class size? Topic?

Prioritization

8. When designing your syllabus and/or a course, how do you pick and choose what assignments, skills, or lessons you will utilize?
9. What elements (social, economic, political, resources, trends, personal interests etc.) do you take into consideration when making these decisions?
 - a. Please explain how these influences are represented in your syllabus.

10. Do you think these priorities are shown in the sequencing or planning of learning opportunities throughout the semester?
11. Do you think these priorities are affected by the course level (200 vs 400)? Class size? Topic area? Online offering?

Facilitation

12. How would you describe your approach to facilitating learning opportunities through your courses?
 - a. What influences have led to this approach? (social, economic, political, resources, trends, personal interests etc.)
 - b. Can you describe a time in which your approach has been successful?
 - c. Can you describe a time in which your approach was not successful?
13. Do you think there are any differences between your facilitation styles between higher and lower level courses? If so, please explain.
 - a. Do you see class size, topic area, or location of the class as affecting your performance throughout the course?
14. Do you think you use your syllabus differently in certain WS/WGS/ or WGSS classes that you teach?
15. Do you think your approach to facilitating learning opportunities has changed over time? If so, please explain.
16. Is there anything else you'd like to share regarding your experience teaching WS/WGS/ or WGSS in Indiana or preparing, prioritizing, or facilitating learning opportunities in your WS/WGS/ or WGSS classes?

Demographics

Age:

Experience Teaching in Higher Education (time period):

Experience Teaching in WGS (time period):

Job title:

Race:

Other relevant identities:

Interview Script

[Warm up questions]

How's your day going?

Has it been pretty busy today?

[Prior to audio recording]

First off, I just want to thank you for taking some time out of your no doubt busy schedule to meet with me. I truly do appreciate your willingness to sit down with a complete stranger and talk about your work. I know you've seen this before [hands participant copy of informed consent] but I just want to remind you of your rights as a voluntary participant in the study. I'll be asking you questions regarding your experience teaching WGS in Indiana as well as how you prepare, prioritize, and facilitate learning opportunities in your WGS classroom. If any point a question is asked that you do not wish to answer, please just let me know and we will skip that question.

Are there any questions I can answer for you at this time?

I will be using pseudonyms in this study, is there a specific name you would like to use?

Would it be alright with you if I recorded this interview?

[Begin recorded interview]

Just as a reminder for both you and myself, the purpose of this study is to understand the experiences and efforts of instructors while teaching for a WS/WGS/ or WGSS program or department in a conservative state where the culture challenges the core of the academic discipline.

[Experience]

So, let's start out with your overall experience teaching for a WS/WGS/ or WGSS program/department.

What words would you use describe your experience teaching WS/WGS/WGSS in Indiana?

Would you mind sharing a few examples of experiences that embody those words?

[Preparation]

Alright so let's shift gears a little bit here, I'd like to ask you to focus on how you prepare for a new academic semester.

Is there a specific teaching philosophy you follow?

So prior the beginning of the semester, what kind of preparation process do you partake in? Please explain how your syllabus is involved in this process.

Does this process differ from new classes or classes you are teaching for the first time?

Does the location of the classroom (online or face-to-face) impact how you prepare for teaching?

Do you think the level of the course influences your preparation? What about class size? Does the topic of the class influence this at all?

[Prioritization]

There's a lot of content to cover in a semester so my next couple of questions are about how you choose what to cover.

When designing your syllabus and/or a course, how do you pick and choose what assignments, skills, or lessons you will utilize?

What elements (social, economic, political, resources, trends, personal interests etc.) do you take into consideration when making these decisions? Please explain how these influences are represented in your syllabus.

Do you think these priorities are shown in the sequencing or planning of learning opportunities throughout the semester?

Do you think these priorities are affected by the course level (200 vs 400)? Again, class size? Topic area? Online offering?

[Facilitation]

So now that you've done all this planning and you've made some pretty important choices about how the semester is going to progress, I'd like you to focus on how you use these elements in your actual teaching.

How would you describe your approach to facilitating learning opportunities through your courses?

What influences have led to this approach? (social, economic, political, resources, trends, personal interests etc.)

Can you describe a time in which your approach has been successful?

Can you describe a time in which your approach was not successful?

Do you think there are any differences between your facilitation styles between higher and lower level courses? If so, please explain.

Do you see class size, topic area, or location of the class as affecting your performance throughout the course?

Do you think you use your syllabus differently in certain WS/WGS/ or WGSS classes that you teach?

Do you think your approach to facilitating learning opportunities has changed over time? If so, please explain.

[Wrap up]

Just as a reminder, the purpose of this study is to understand the experiences and efforts of instructors while teaching for a WGS program or department in a conservative state where the culture challenges the core of the academic discipline.

Is there anything else you'd like to share regarding your experience teaching WS/WGS/ or WGSS in Indiana or preparing, prioritizing, or facilitating learning opportunities in your WS/WGS/ or WGSS classes?

Have I missed anything you think is important to include?

[Demographics]

Alright, the last bit I need from you is just some basic demographic information. These questions are going to be a little rapid fire.

If you don't mind me asking, how old are you?

How long have you been teaching in higher education?

How long have you been teaching for a WS/WGS/ or WGSS program/department?

What is your job title?

What is your racial identity?

Are there any other identities that you think are relevant to the information you've shared with me today?

[Closing]

Okay well I believe that it's it for me. Are there any questions you have for me?

I want to thank you again for taking some time out of your day to spend with me. I deeply appreciate your honesty and openness regarding your experience teaching. If at any point you feel uncomfortable about something you've shared with me today or you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me. Thank you again.

Appendix F – Audit Trail

Audit Trail

Date	Action Item
5/24/18	Received IRB exemption letter
5/30/18	Pilot interview conducted with one pilot participant (Vanessa)
6/01/18	Transcribed interview with pilot participant Vanessa
6/20/18	Emailed summer participants recruitment email
6/21/18	Scheduled interview with one participant
6/26/18	Scheduled interview with two participants
6/28/18	Scheduled interview with one participant
6/29/18	Conducted interview with participant one (Andy)
7/05/18	Transcribed interview with participant one (Andy)
7/05/18	Wrote in reflexivity journal
7/09/18	Conducted interview with participant two (Eli)
7/12/18	Transcribed interview with participant two (Eli)
7/12/18	Wrote in reflexivity journal
7/12/18	Scheduled interview with one participant
7/13/18	Conducted interview with participant three (Rosie)
7/23/18	Scheduled interview with one participant
7/24/18	Transcribed interview with participant three (Rosie)
7/24/18	Wrote in reflexivity journal
7/25/18	Conducted interview with participant four (Aileen)
7/27/18	Conducted interview with participant five (Jimmy)
8/01/18	Emailed fall participants recruitment email
8/01/18	Transcribed interview with participant four (Aileen)
8/01/18	Wrote in reflexivity journal
8/08/18	Scheduled interview with participant six
8/12/18	Scheduled interview with participant seven
8/15/18	Conducted interview with participant seven (Anna)
8/17/18	Transcribed interview with participant five (Jimmy)
8/17/18	Wrote in reflexivity journal
8/24/18	Transcribed interview with participant seven (Anna)
8/24/18	Wrote in reflexivity journal
8/27/17	Conducted interview with participant six (Paul)
9/06/18	Scheduled interview with participant eight
9/08/18	Scheduled interview with participant nine
9/11/18	Conducted interview with participant eight (Joan)
9/13/18	Scheduled interview with participant ten
9/14/18	Conducted interview with participant nine (Nzingha)
9/21/18	Conducted interview with participant ten (Cordelia)
9/21/18	Transcribed interview with participant six (Paul)
9/21/18	Wrote in reflexivity journal

9/22/18	Scheduled interview with participant eleven (Tulip)
9/26/18	Scheduled follow-up interview with participant ten (Cordelia) [technology issue]
9/28/18	Transcribed interview with participant eight (Joan)
9/28/18	Wrote in reflexivity journal
10/01/18	Transcribed interview with participant nine (Nzingha)
10/01/18	Wrote in reflexivity journal
10/04/18	Conducted interview with participant eleven (Tulip)
10/05/18	Conducted second interview with participant ten (Cordelia)
10/12/18	Transcribed interview with participant ten (Cordelia)
10/12/18	Wrote in reflexivity journal
10/15/18	Transcribed interview with participant eleven (Tulip)
10/15/18	Wrote in reflexivity journal
11/02/18	Analyzed and Coded Andy interview
11/05/18	Analyzed and Coded Eli interview
11/07/18	Analyzed and Coded Rosie interview
11/16/18	Analyzed and Coded Aileen & Jimmy interview
11/19/18	Analyzed and Coded Anna interview
11/26/18	Analyzed and Coded Paul interview
11/28/18	Analyzed and Coded Joan interview
11/29/18	Analyzed and Coded Cordelia & Nzingha interview
11/30/18	Analyzed and Coded Tulip interview
12/07/18	Analyzed and Coded across all interview

Appendix G – Data Analysis Coding, Theme, and Finding Progression Example

Transcript	Code	Theme/Finding
<p>Interviewer: Okay. So you've prepared, you've decided what's going to make the cut, you've decided what your semester is kind of look like, we're going to focus specifically on your actual teaching now. How would you describe your approach to facilitating learning opportunities?</p> <p>Joan: My classes are completely discussion based, always have been. And I prefer to keep it that way, I want to keep it that way. Especially if an intro to-to-to 210 an intro to WGS, I-it should be discussion based I feel like. If you don't give students the opportunity to-to tell their stories, to share their experiences, to know where they're coming from, then I honestly don't think that you are truly understanding their world and how they're going to see WGS and how they're going to see the issues that you're going to present to them. And you notice it especially when it comes to-here lately, especially I teach face-to-face classes, I have night classes. And so I often have nontraditional students in my classes as opposed to traditional students during the day or even online nontraditional students online. And what you find is, especially as students who are my age and, in my generation, -my generation grew up where certain things, certain words, it's they just were, right? Where-where something might like-like "transsexual" was "it's just an operation. It-it doesn't mean anything." However at the same time today, you don't just go spouting off, you know, the word transsexual, right? And so I think that it's important that-that you have those discussion-based classes when you're teaching because you need to see and hear where people are gauge where they are so that you also know do you need to emphasize this a little more, do you need to-to emphasize that a little bit more? Do they have a firm grasp on, you know, X, Y, and Z as opposed to things like quizzes, you know? Don't want to do pop quizzes to make sure people read, you know, but discussion based is-is-is me. That's just that's it, it's discussion. (pp. 18-19)</p>	<p>Discussion</p> <p>Story-telling</p> <p>Students as resources</p> <p>Perceived student needs</p> <p>Instructor as guide</p> <p>Vocabulary</p> <p>Basics/foundational information</p> <p>Obligating reading</p>	<p>"Learning with and from Each Other"</p> <p>Encouraging Engagement</p> <p>"Developing a Shared and Foundational Understanding"</p> <p>Guiding Students to Personal and Academic Growth</p>
<p>Paul: I usually in lower level courses where I really am trying to get them to like absorb a set of ideas and conversations and the sort of unfolding I tend to use take</p>	<p>Assessment</p>	<p>"Challenging & Rewarding Students"</p>

<p>home exams. So, I'll have two big kind of a midterm and a final they usually get between seven and 10 days to work on it and it-the questions are usually some version of they will posit a sort of issue and they'll say "go in mobilized three or four of the readings that we've done in the course of this first part of the semester in order to kind of respond to this question" so, that I can assess whether they're doing the reading how well they're grasping it, and whether they can do something with it synthetically in response to a sort of broader thing. At the upper level, I tend to-so, when we get to three or 400 level courses, partly because they're a little bit smaller and I-I tend to rely more on papers that are written in response to prompts so, you know, that are kind of open ended in it and essentially invite them to do the same thing, but are a little more kind of topically focused and less synthetic in terms of what other people have said and more synthetic in terms of can you take a reading that we've had and like think a thought of your own or take a position with respect to a particular question that bares on that reading? So, I'm a big fan of writing on that level and the other thing is because I really do believe, you know, and I always tell students in my-my like gay and lesbian history class every midterm and a final, like your job is to- and you'll see this in your obligations part of all my syllabi- it's like you have to read, you have to keep up with it, you know, you have to participate not because it's a virtue but because it's important for you to practice being heard and finding ways to make yourself be heard, and then you have to show me, the-I'm not going to give you stupid quizzes. (pp. 36-37)</p>	<p>Written Communication</p> <p>Differentiated Expectations</p> <p>Oral Communication</p> <p>Responsibility/ Accountability</p> <p>Challenging Intellectual Skill</p> <p>Reading</p> <p>Obligate Reading</p>	<p>Outside of the Classroom"</p> <p>Guiding Students to Personal and Academic Growth</p> <p>"Making Changes across Semesters and Courses"</p> <p>Courses as Living Entities</p>
<p>Cordelia: At the beginning of this semester, we were-my Women's Studies class the Intro was in a highly reflective classroom, and I was like "we got to go. I can't be in here." It was awful. So I-I usually don't ask to switch classrooms until I get to know the students of the little bit-until I get to know these students because like I said, sometimes I have this vision for how things are going to go and then I meet my students and I'm like "nope!" And sometimes that's why I change classrooms. I go "I like this classroom right until I met you. And now, we got to go." I had a student with- it was not in Women's Studies but the idea transfers- I had a student with severe PTSD. He suffered brain injury in time of war and we are in a classroom that was abutted indoor</p>	<p>Conducive Learning Environment</p> <p>Care</p> <p>Perceived Student Needs</p> <p>Accessibility/ Accommodating</p>	<p>"Care for the Group"</p> <p>"Individualized Care"</p> <p>Teaching as a Form of Care</p>

<p>outdoor hallway and we have these heavy- you have them at _____ too- these super heavy indoor-outdoor doors that every time the door open and closed you would hear “WHOMP.” And every single time he was like watching clutching the ceiling, right? And so-so here is the main factor I think about. Will this- how-how to what extent will this classroom facilitate community? Does it fit the number of students? Is it too big for the number of students? Do we need something feels a little bit more intimate? (p. 12)</p>		
<p>Aileen: I want to create a safe, thriving, learning environment where I challenge every student to do a lot of reading, writing, and thinking. In all my years of teaching, I’ve very rarely had a student say my classes are easy. I aspire to really challenge them to make them work hard and then give them every opportunity to refine that work, to make it better, to help them achieve their own objectives for the course, and to reward them amply. When I teach my online courses I’m very low tech. Quite frankly my classes are not nearly as pretty as I’m sure a lot of younger or even older people that are more technologically savvy than I am. What I have tried to do is to incorporate my teaching philosophy into the online environment. I make it deeply personal. I can do that in Women’s Studies and Communication because my classes are rarely more than 25-30 people and every student in my class gets, you know, an email that says “Welcome Ashley! So happy to see that you’re in the class. Excited to hear about the work you’re doing at _____.” And you know my daughter has- this true-several friends at she goes there every once in a while, to visit and hang out and I can tell them about your program next time I see them. I try to make my experiences with my students deeply personal and that includes respecting what their own goals and objectives are. And so I say to students- and I say I struggle with this, but I will force myself to live up to the fact that if all you want is a C so that you can move on, I’m good with that and I’ll help you to do that. If what you want is an A, there’s no guarantee that any amount of work you do will get you an A because it really is not about quantity it’s about quality, but I’ll do everything I can do get you achieve that A. To that end, I am the queen of rough drafts, you know, I will take a rough draft of just about everything and anything and, you know, continue</p>	<p>Safe Space</p> <p>Challenging Intellectual Skill</p> <p>Written Communication</p> <p>Reading</p> <p>Instruction Goal</p> <p>Size</p> <p>Help</p> <p>Respect Student Goals</p> <p>Online</p> <p>One-on-One Communication</p> <p>Email</p> <p>Instructor to Student Feedback</p> <p>Student Goals</p>	<p>“Care for the Group”</p> <p>“Individualized Care”</p> <p>“Challenges of Care Giving”</p> <p>Teaching as a Form of Care</p> <p>“Challenging and Rewarding Students Outside of the Classroom”</p> <p>Guiding Students to Personal and Academic Growth</p>

to give people feedback so they can meet what their objectives are which again doesn't necessarily mean that all things end in an A but probably a lot more things end in As then, I think, in other professor's classes. (pp. 5-6)		
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